



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
Working together for a safer Scotland

PUBLIC SPECIAL MEETING - SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

MONDAY 22 JUNE 2026 @ 0930 HRS

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

PRESENT:

Mhairi Wylie, Chair (MW)
Stuart Ballingall (SJB)
Neil Mapes (NM)
Malcolm Payton (MP)
Madeline Smith (MS)

Angiolina Foster, Deputy Chair (AF)
Brian Baverstock (BB)
Therese O'Donnell (TO'D)
Andrew Smith (AS)
Tim Wright (TW)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Stuart Stevens (SS)	Chief Officer
David Farries (DF)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Operational Delivery
Jon Henderson (JH)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Prevention
Craig McGoldrick (CMcG)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Training, Safety and Assurance
Mark McAteer (MMcA)	Director of Governance, Strategy and Change
Deborah Stanfield (DS)	Interim Director of Finance, Digital and Infrastructure
Lyndsey Gaja (LG)	Head of People
Asha Narsapur (AN)	Legal Services Manager
Christopher Casey (CC)	Group Commander, Board Support Manager
Heather Greig (HG)	Executive Officer Board Support
Debbie Haddow (DJH)	Board Support/Minutes

1 CHAIR'S WELCOME

1.1 The Chair opened the meeting welcoming those in attendance and observing via MS Teams. On behalf of the Board, congratulations were extended to Watch Commander Ian Nicholson and Area Commander Chris Getty on being awarded the King's Fire Service Medal.

2 APOLOGIES

2.1 Paul Stollard, Board Member
Andy Watt, Deputy Chief Officer

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

3.1 No items were identified.

4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

- Madeline Smith, Board Member of Scottish Ambulance Service
- Therese O'Donnell, Non-Executive Advisor, Forestry & Land Scotland

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

5 SERVICE DELIVERY REVIEW (SDR) RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Opening Remarks

5.1.1 The Chair outlined the approach noting that the 3 recommendations would be taken in turn and at each stage Board Members would be encouraged to seek sufficient assurance and undertake scrutiny to reach a decision. The first recommendation would consider the case for change and whether the Service Delivery Review (SDR) process remained the appropriate mechanism to deliver that change. The second recommendation would consider whether the SDR process had been legally compliant and had followed the required governance procedures. The third recommendation would consider the recurring/common themes identified throughout the process as well as the individual cases for change.

5.1.2 It was noted that the recurring/common themes included, but were not limited to, response times, community safety and prevention, recruitment, retention and training of On-Call firefighters, firefighter safety, wellbeing and welfare, and development within local communities in relation to risk and demand and seeking further assurance on the Community Risk Index Model (CRIM).

5.1.3 The Board were offered the opportunity to raise any general questions, which did not pertain to the first two recommendations or relate to individual options, to ensure appropriate scrutiny and assurance across the wider national programme. The Board were reminded that questions or comments should be focussed and concise to support the efficient running of the meeting.

5.1.4 The Board were reminded that the preferred approach would be to reach decisions by consensus, however given the range of options under consideration this may not be possible. As per SFRS Standing Orders, should a vote be required, this would be conducted by a show of hands, with each member's vote recorded in the minute for transparency and public record. It was noted that reaching consensus would not prevent individual members from recording a question, query or concern, provided they were content to support the overall position. Should any vote deviate from the proposed recommendation, the reason for that decision would also be recorded to ensure a clear and transparent public record.

5.1.5 The Board were reminded of their wider responsibilities which included ensuring that all consultation responses, particularly those raising new ideas/challenges/information not previously considered had been properly reviewed and taken into account. The Board should also ensure that they were satisfied that the hurdle criteria had been met and that the options were viable and safe. The Board should also ensure that they were content that any decisions reached could withstand scrutiny from staff and the communities served.

5.1.6 The Chair acknowledged and thanked everyone who responded to the consultation, noting that their input had helped shape the questions, thinking and considerations brought to this meeting. Thanks were also extended to elected members for ensuring their constituents' voices were heard, and to staff for both developing the options and providing constructive challenge throughout the process.

5.2 Case for Change and Deliverability

- 5.2.1 SS offered his congratulations to Watch Commander Nicholson and Area Commander Getty on their being awarded the King's Fire Service Medal and welcomed colleagues and observers to the meeting.
- 5.2.2 SS advised that he would outline the process and the case for change before discussions focussed on individual recommendations. SS commented on the approach taken to develop evidence-based recommendations for the future delivery of services across Scotland. It was noted that the purpose of the meeting was to consider the recommendations presented and to provide assurance to the Board.
- 5.2.3 SS noted that the process underpinning the recommendations had been robust, transparent, and aligned with the Service's statutory responsibilities, strategic priorities, and commitment to public safety. SS acknowledged that there were elements of the review that had caused concern for staff, representative bodies, communities and stakeholders. SS further noted that any change within emergency services had to be carefully considered, properly managed, grounded in operational assurance and focused on maintaining public confidence.
- 5.2.4 SS stated that his intention from the outset had been for the process to be open, transparent and for individual voices to be heard, fully considered and reflected in the outcomes. SS offered his thanks to communities, stakeholders and staff for their engagement and contribution throughout the consultation. SS offered his assurance that the feedback received had been valuable and had directly influenced the final recommendations.
- 5.2.5 SS reminded the Board that the Service's purpose was to protect the communities it serves and to ensure the safety of its staff. As Chief Officer, SS offered his assurance that he would not compromise on this.
- 5.2.6 SS outlined the context and strategic drivers for the SDR noting that the Service's operating environment continues to evolve with changing operational demand, complex community risks, financial pressures, workforce challenges and increased expectations around prevention, resilience and partnership working.
- 5.2.7 SS noted that the SDR had been commissioned to assess whether the current delivery model remained sustainable, effective and fit for the future and was not a purely financial exercise. The recommendations were intended to strengthen and modernise service delivery incrementally, to respond to future risk and demand. The review aligned with public service reform, the Fire Framework, continuous improvement, best value, prevention, partnership and fiscal sustainability. SS further noted that difficult decisions were required to ensure the Service had the right capacity and capability in the right place at the right time to respond to emerging risks.
- 5.2.8 SS noted that a key benefit from SDR related to prevention activities and the need to build on this further to support wider national outcomes and focussing on protecting vulnerable people, reducing inequalities, and helping young people to thrive. Strengthening fire safety enforcement capability and resources, and a safer built environment was essential for communities and firefighter safety. It was noted that changing operational demand had increased the need for more specialist training as firefighter roles become more complex and technical due to emerging risks related to climate change, terrorism and wildfire requiring enhanced preparedness. To ensure the effective delivery of training, the appropriate infrastructure, resources and capability were required. Due to the success of prevention activities, exposure to experiential learning was limited, therefore the Service had to ensure that firefighters were appropriately trained and prepared. Increasing off-station resources would help to improve community and firefighter safety across Scotland.

- 5.2.9 SS noted that another key benefit from SDR related to strengthening support for On-Call colleagues, who cover most of Scotland's landmass and were essential in protecting communities. SS commented on the need for more flexible and dynamic solutions, including a broader range of shift systems, to improve resilience, support diversity ambitions and make better use of resources. SS further noted that the proposed options could help address the Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) position, support progress on the capital backlog, and mitigate organisational risks. The wider fiscal context, particularly the Spending Review and the need for public service reform, reinforced the importance of change, while recognising that deliverability, capacity and financial impact must be carefully managed.
- 5.2.10 The Board, noting the reinvestment opportunities within prevention, sought clarification on what additional prevention activities could be delivered or enhanced. JH advised that additional prevention resources would directly support community activity, including youth engagement, increased fire safety audits and planning for major events. JH noted that legislation was a key part of prevention work, and with additional capacity the Service could help influence and shape legislation in areas such as battery energy storage systems. The Service would also have more capacity to respond to recommendations arising from significant fire-related incidents. JH reminded the Board that the Service had been effective in prevention over several years and had developed strong learning and partnerships as a result. However, the Service had to continue to adapt to new risks and changing demand and the work of the New and Emerging Risks Group was highlighted. JH noted that any increase in prevention capacity would make a significant difference.
- 5.2.11 The Board sought clarity on how lessons learned, and benefits realised, from any decisions made would be assessed, in order to maximise the value of those decisions and to inform future service change processes. In addition, the Board queried, given the changes that had taken place over the two-year process, whether there may be scope in future for smaller scale or local periodic review processes.
- 5.2.12 MMCA advised that the standard SFRS benefits management process had been applied to the SDR programme. This process operated at both project and programme level, with oversight through established governance routes, including the Change, Performance and Improvement Group and the Strategic Planning and Change Committee. MMCA further advised that benefits would be defined, monitored and reviewed at each stage of the programme with progress captured through the benefits realisation process. Reviews would take place at key stage gates, with a post-implementation review capturing benefits realised and lessons learned. Findings would then be reported through the appropriate governance channels, providing regular updates over the coming years.
- 5.2.13 The Board agreed that, due to the breadth of the recommendations and potential impact across the organisation, the Integrated Governance Forum would discuss and consider the appropriate governance route(s) through the relevant committees to avoid any duplications.
- 5.2.14 The Board queried whether the same process would be appropriate for any future service changes. SS advised that the process would be subject to a detailed and structured debrief involving a range of stakeholders, including the Board and Strategic Leadership Team (SLT). SS noted that the scale and interdependencies of this programme required the approach taken, future changes may be better suited to more localised or smaller scale processes. SS commented on the significant learning that had already been gained and that consideration would be given to the most appropriate approach for future change activity.

- 5.2.15 The Board sought clarity on how the Service would track benefits from reinvestment, particularly the outcomes and impacts delivered, within the context of a national Service delivered locally. MMcA advised that the specific change programmes would include benefits realisation plans, supported by wider performance management arrangements for assessing benefits and impact across the Service. MMcA noted that the Performance Management Framework would be used to track impacts on prevention activity and outcomes for communities.
- 5.2.16 The Board asked whether SS, as Accountable Officer, was confident that the proposals presented would help the Service progress towards a more sustainable operating model and improve the level of best value delivered to communities across Scotland. SS confirmed that he was confident the proposals would support these objectives. SS reminded the Board that the Service had demonstrated best value since its inception, which had been recognised every year by Scottish Government. SS advised that the proposals would help drive the continued commitment to change, reform and best value whilst supporting the effective use of capital and other resources and establishing the building blocks for a more sustainable operating model.
- 5.2.17 Referring to the capacity metric table (paragraph 3.1.1 within the covering report), the Board sought clarification that there would be no reduction in full time firefighter posts and that there would be an increase of one wholetime pumping appliance when compared to the 2023/24 baseline figure following the proposed implementation. SS confirmed that this was correct.
- 5.2.18 The Board noted that the Service had remained largely unchanged for a considerable period and that the issue was wider than establishing a case for change. The Board further noted that the Service had a responsibility to better align risk and demand, as well as continuing to deliver public service reform and best value. It was noted that the case for change was compelling and described the proposals as a measured, data-driven and responsible process for moving incrementally in that direction.
- 5.3 The Board agreed that there was a need for change and that the principles of the SDR process provided the mechanism for those changes. The Board approved the first recommendation.**
- 5.4 Service Delivery Review (SDR) Process**
- 5.4.1 SS extended his thanks to all colleagues across the Service who had contributed to the delivery of this process, in particular the SDR team, and acknowledged that the process had been significant and challenging.
- 5.4.2 DF advised that a full overview of the SDR process, including the 2024 pre-consultation stage, had been provided within the covering report (paragraph 2.18) and noted that the Board had been kept updated throughout.
- 5.4.3 DF highlighted that areas of assurance had been provided at different stages and referenced the strong emphasis on public consultation and the detailed feedback received through that process. It was noted that the public consultation generated 3,700 online survey responses, around 840 attendees at 40 community engagement events, and a further 51 staff engagement sessions. DF stated that the level of interaction and engagement had been significant and thanked the teams involved in supporting this activity throughout the process. DF noted that in preparation for consultation, several partners and independent external organisations had been engaged to support the process. This helped to ensure the Service had given due consideration to the Gunning Principles in relation to public consultation. DF further noted that Operational Research in Health Ltd (ORH) were also engaged to provide modelling and independent analytical expertise.

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- 5.4.4 DF advised that the Board had been kept informed as relationships with these partners developed. He noted that the SDR team, SDR Programme Board and internal governance structures referred to by MMcA provided confidence in the process, supported by the extensive Board pack and associated information.
- 5.4.5 DF advised that the final stage before Board consideration had been a review by the SDR Board and then the SLT, which provided a further layer of assurance on each option for change and the recommendations brought forward.
- 5.4.6 The Board recognised the contributions of the external organisations involved in the process and expressed particular thanks to the Health and Social Care Alliance, who facilitated the community-based events.
- 5.4.7 With reference to the risk appetite, the Board questioned how the recommendations had balanced national and local stakeholder views, recognised the contrast between feedback received from the wider Scottish public and views expressed locally, and how this had informed the balance between risk and opportunity. SS advised that the process had considered the relevant risk factors and the Service's risk appetite, and the overarching need to balance risk, demand and improvements in determining the right course of action for the Service. SS stated that the process had demonstrated that community views and other relevant considerations had been taken into account and that appropriate cognisance had been given to the areas of risk appetite identified. SS invited the Board to reflect on whether the proposals aligned with their own risk appetite and whether Board Members were assured that the relevant risks had been fully considered.
- 5.4.8 The Board acknowledged that the risks faced by the Service had changed since its inception. The Board noted that the Service would continue to face additional risks and challenges and that required a balance as work continued to respond as circumstances changed. It was noted that the recommendations represented progress, but consideration of risk appetite should also include how this continues to develop beyond the decisions being made.
- 5.4.9 The Board sought clarification that the ORH technical modelling and CRIM had taken account of projected climate change impacts, particularly in relation to flood and wildfire high-risk areas. SS advised that DF would respond on the CRIM element and JH would provide details on preparatory activity relating to flooding and wildfire, including relevant academic work and wider organisational intelligence.
- 5.4.10 DF noted that some of these points would be covered later under recurring themes, but agreed it was appropriate to address the question in the context of the current recommendation and process. DF advised that the ORH model used historic geographical data from flood, wildfire and other incidents to generate simulated incidents. The CRIM used a specific flood risk layer, using SEPA information, on flood plains and risk areas. DF confirmed that the modelling was primarily based on historic and current risk, and that further approaches would be required to assess future climate-related risk. DF noted that further information would be provided under the recurring themes agenda item.
- 5.4.11 JH advised the Board that the New and Emerging Risks Group had specific sub groups focused on flooding and wildfire. JH highlighted the work in relation to wildfire, which included multi agency contributions in forecasting future risk, strengthening preparedness across both the Service and Scotland more widely and learning from previous incidents. JH provided a brief overview of the Service's work with academic partners, including University of Edinburgh, in relation to both flooding and wildfire to learn from past events, assess potential future developments and plan for future incidents.

- 5.4.12 The Board sought assurance across the full process, including the pre-consultation exercise that informed the overall approach. The Board queried how specific and/or emerging risks which had been identified through the consultation process had been reflected on and how additional feedback received during consultation had been considered. DF advised that information from the public consultation, including new developments within communities and risk intelligence, CRIM and modelling outputs had been considered together as part of the assessment process. DF noted that the recurring themes section outlined how assessments had been made and the factors that informed them. DF noted that further information would be provided under the recurring themes agenda item.
- 5.4.13 The Board sought assurance that the Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) were complete and up to date for the purposes of the decision being made, while recognising that further work would continue during implementation. LG advised that the EHRIA had continually been updated throughout the process and could be considered complete and up to date for the purposes of the Board's decision. The assessments would continue to be reviewed and updated throughout any implementation period for options approved by the Board.
- 5.4.14 The Board sought clarity of the methodology used in the Diffley report, particularly how a large volume of online and face-to-face responses had been reduced to 18 substantive options and sought assurance that no significant or alternative points had been missed. DF explained that SDR related correspondence had been analysed using the same approach as the Diffley work, including sentiment and thematic analysis, and confirmed he was confident that nothing had been missed.
- 5.4.15 The Board questioned how the Service had ensured that the views of individuals and communities who took part in the consultation had been reflected in the review, and what changes demonstrated that their voices had been heard. It was noted that this reflected an earlier question raised and would be addressed through the discussion on feedback and specific options.
- 5.4.16 The Board noted concerns about timescales, prioritisation and the potential impact of delayed delivery particularly as this could leave communities and staff with uncertainty for a prolonged period. DF advised that deliverability within five years had been built into the assessment criteria, alongside factors such as benefit, affordability, etc. DF noted that some options would require significant capital investment or multiple dependencies before they could be delivered, whilst others could be implemented more quickly. DF further noted that once decisions had been made, clear communication and engagement with communities and staff would be essential, particularly where delivery may take longer due to these additional factors. SS acknowledged the concern regarding longer timescales but reiterated the reasons for this noting that engagement would be essential to keep staff and communities informed and reassured throughout the process.
- 5.4.17 The Board sought reassurance that the SLT had applied common sense checks and professional judgement throughout the extensive process. SS advised that the Programme Board had reviewed a substantial volume of information before presentation to the SLT for scrutiny. SS further advised how the SLT had scrutinised the material through several workshops and sessions, how they had applied strategic oversight, professional judgement and common sense checks before agreeing on the final recommendations. SS noted that the SLT had considered the strategic fit, risk mitigation, deliverability, organisational capacity and workforce implications and had sought additional assurance in some areas, including stakeholder feedback and specific options.
- 5.4.18 The Board sought clarity on the governance route which would be used to consider the outcomes of further pre-implementation assessment and review against economic, social, technological and related factors. DF advised that this work would be undertaken

by the SDR team and be overseen by the SDR Programme Board. MMcA noted that this work would now form part of the wider programme of change, which would be reported to the SLT, Strategic Planning and Change Committee and the Board. Should any material change be required this would follow the normal change request process which would be taken to the Strategic Planning and Change Committee.

- 5.4.19 The Board acknowledged the quality and depth of the information provided and were assured that themes and summaries had reflected individual comments. The Board queried how implementation would be de-risked and managed, particularly in relation to concerns such as recruiting On-Call staff. DF advised that following the decisions made, Local Senior Officers and their teams would be involved in detailed implementation planning. DF noted that this would link with wider Service initiatives, including the On-Call improvement programme, and that implementation would move from being led primarily by the Programme team to becoming a shared responsibility across functions.

5.5 The Board agreed and were assured that the overall process undertaken had been evidence-based, legally compliant, and adhered to the Gunning principles. The Board approved the second recommendation.

(The meeting broke at 1042 hrs and reconvened at 1050 hrs)

5.6 Recurring Themes

- 5.6.1 DF explained that the intention was to cover recurring themes from the public consultation, public meetings and staff engagement sessions. DF noted that specific issues would be considered later under each individual option for change. However, this section provided an opportunity to discuss general areas of concern and the Service's overall position on the SDR.

5.6.2 Response Times

DF advised that response times had been a recurring theme throughout the consultation and explained that this section would cover how response times had been considered during the planning stages of the SDR. DF noted that it was important to recognise the wider context when discussing response times as part of the review. DF noted that average response times had generally increased over recent years across the UK. However, there had been reductions in fire fatalities, fire casualties and accidental dwelling fires which indicated that the effectiveness of a modern fire and rescue service could not be determined by response times alone. Prevention, protection, community safety activity, building standards and risk-based deployment of resources had all contributed to improved outcomes for the communities. DF reiterated that the most important response time was the time between the fire starting, its discovery and the alarm being raised, which underlined the importance of prevention activity.

- 5.6.3 DF acknowledged that response times remain a key performance indicator and measure of emergency response capability. Where changes to stations, appliances or crewing arrangements were being considered, it was reasonable to understand the potential impact on the response time. DF advised that Scotland does not operate nationally prescribed response standards and therefore the approach taken had been to compare likely response times from proposed options with those in similar communities elsewhere in Scotland. This had provided comparable response times in communities with similar populations, geography, risk profiles and demand levels to provide an evidence-based way to assess whether a proposed change was fair, proportionate and aligned to risk. DF stated that the aim had not been to meet an arbitrary target time, merely to demonstrate that the proposed service delivery model would provide an appropriate level of emergency response when compared with other communities facing similar risks.

- 5.6.4 DF advised that independent modelling had shown that the proposed changes would have only localised impacts on initial appliance response times and station workloads, with no wider regional or national impact on operational resilience. DF noted that the modelling had been supported by operational evidence from the temporary appliance withdrawals in September 2023, which had been reviewed and evaluated. The evaluation had found no evidence of any detrimental impact on the Service's ability to deliver an effective operational response. This provided additional confidence that the SDR change options could be implemented without materially compromising operational performance.
- 5.6.5 DF noted that rising response times remains a focus for the UK wide fire sector and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) were considering commissioning work in this area. DF further noted that, due to the concerns raised within the process, the Service had already commissioned academic work with Northumbria University.
- 5.6.6 MMcA advised that SFRS had engaged Northumbria University to develop a model examining the travel-time element of response times and the external factors contributing to increases over the past decade. Factors such as traffic calming, low-emission zones, congestion and weather conditions, etc affected appliance travel even under blue-light conditions. The work had been subject to information governance and university ethics processes. Modelling was now underway with an initial update to be provided to the SLT and a subsequent fuller update to be presented to the Board in due course. Once finalised the model would be handed over to the Service to maintain and use to better understand response time pressures and inform future contingency planning.
- 5.6.7 The Board sought confirmation that the local authority level data showed no significant increase for most options and therefore reflected the dispersed regional impact of the proposed changes, supporting equitable service provision across Scotland. DF confirmed that the interpretation of the regional data was accurate but recognised that localised response time variations were associated with the individual options. DF explained that appliance placement, workload distribution and the effect on neighbouring stations had been central considerations in the SDR programme.
- 5.6.8 The Board sought assurance on prevention activity and that firefighting training standards had been maintained alongside incident outcomes throughout the 2023 temporary appliance withdrawals. DF recognised concerns regarding maintaining commitment and statutory responsibilities in areas where resources had been withdrawn. DF advised that the evaluation of the temporary withdrawals had shown that surrounding stations had sufficient capacity to continue prevention, community safety and training activities. These areas had been closely monitored during the temporary withdrawal period with other resources used to maintain performance.
- 5.6.9 The Board queried whether the academic work would consider response times and future forecasting. MMcA noted that response times were made up of several elements, including call handling, crew mobilisation and travel time, and that better understanding of the factors affecting travel time could support future planning. MMcA further noted that the base model needed to be stabilised before further forecasting work could be explored and advised that an update would be brought to the Board in due course. JH highlighted that the new mobilising system was a key development and once fully embedded would improve mobilisation of appliances. SS reminded the Board of the importance of prevention and its role in reducing the time between ignition and discovery. Over the last 10 years, despite a population increase, there had been a reduction in accidental dwelling fires (28%), dwelling fire casualties (47%), and dwelling fire fatalities (48%).
- 5.6.10 The Board acknowledged that response times had generated significant interest and concern during the public consultation. The Board noted that in addition to the analysis summary provided, they had undertaken more detailed consideration of the factors influencing response times. The Board were reassured that the Service had prioritised

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this issue in responding to the feedback and were seeking to optimise resource deployment to better align demand and risk.

- 5.6.11 The Board were reminded that response times would remain subject to quarterly scrutiny by the Service Delivery Committee and would continue to be monitored as proposals moved into business as usual. It was highlighted that the accuracy and resilience of the Service's modelling since the temporary withdrawal of appliances had provided assurance in the professional judgement being applied to factors affecting response times.
- 5.6.12 Community Safety and Prevention
DF advised that another concern raised through the consultation related to whether changes to the model would affect the Service's ability to maintain a strong community presence and continue effective community safety and prevention activity. DF noted that the proposed changes were intended to strengthen this area of work albeit they may be delivered in a different way.
- 5.6.13 DF noted that proposals to introduce a Day Shift Duty System (DSDS) in specific areas would maintain a wholetime resource and day shift crews would be involved in community safety, prevention and preparedness work with local communities. It was noted that in some cases, the existing Risk, Demand and operational modelling had indicated that an On-Call resource would be the appropriate configuration however based on the ability to interface with Communities more readily in a non-operational sense, a DSDS was being proposed.
- 5.6.14 DF noted that the liberated posts through the introduction of the duty system would be reinvested to strengthen support structures, including the off-station structure previously described. This would include prevention teams who could deliver targeted prevention activities. DF stated that the Service was committed to ensuring communities understood the changes within their area, including what engagement, prevention, fire safety and community safety support was available to them.
- 5.6.15 DF noted that the proposed models and liberated posts would help the Service to adapt and effectively respond to future developments in community safety and prevention.
- 5.6.16 JH noted that the Prevention Strategy was based on universal proportionalism and providing a proportionate and consistent response across Scotland whilst targeting support according to need. JH confirmed that this approach would continue with any future changes considered in the round and proportionate action taken in affected areas. JH advised that any additional prevention resources would be a significant benefit for the Service.
- 5.6.17 The Board sought assurance that communities affected by the closure of long-term dormant stations would remain fully included in community engagement, safety and prevention activities. JH confirmed that this was the intention and that any changes as a result of the proposal would result in direct engagement with affected communities with targeted action taken to meet local needs.
- 5.6.18 The Board queried the anticipated timescales for putting individual plans in place should the recommendations be approved. JH noted that the timescales would be specific to each recommendation however the team were ready to commence this activity. JH stated that he did not anticipate any delay as this linked to the overall deliverability and phasing previously discussed.
- 5.6.19 In relation to long-term dormant stations, DF advised that community safety and prevention activities had already been provided in those communities for an extended period of time. Existing response and prevention plans were in place for all of those

locations and provided equitable access to resources. DF noted that there was not an increased risk or demand in these communities rather the focus was to offer reassurance and support.

5.6.20 Recruitment, Retention and Training of On-Call Firefighters

DF advised that another concern raised through the consultation related to the use of On-Call firefighters and the recognised challenge of On-Call availability across Scotland and the wider UK. DF reminded the Board of the Scottish developments through the On-Call Improvement Programme and wider UK developments through the NFCC's strategic work on improving On-Call provision. DF noted that these challenges were routinely monitored and scrutinised by the Service Delivery Committee.

5.6.21 DF highlighted that the options for change identify the preferred model however further work would be required to confirm that the Service could deliver those models effectively. Any changes would be subject to appropriate phasing, sequencing and implementation planning. DF noted that availability varied significantly between stations with some achieving high levels of cover and others facing challenges linked to staffing numbers and firefighters' primary employment commitments.

5.6.22 DF advised that the proposed day shift duty systems were intended to support On-Call provision by placing wholtime firefighters in specific areas to support On-Call provision. New contract bandings introduced to provide greater flexibility for staff provides challenges for the Service to clearly articulate staffing requirements in full-time equivalent terms and to state a fixed number to ensure appliance availability. A new On-Call resource was proposed and targeted recruitment within communities would help to create an On-Call establishment for each individual station. DF noted that creating new On-Call crews from scratch would present challenges, particularly around competence, as trainee firefighters take around three years to become competent.

5.6.23 CMcG advised that any development of an On-Call team would continue to prioritise people with a strong focus on health, safety, wellbeing and all aspects of training that support and build competence. He noted that timescales would vary depending on circumstances, such as whether dual-contract firefighters were already in place or whether recruitment was starting from scratch. CMcG further noted that there was no fixed timeframe as each process would follow existing standards and the full process for acquiring, maintaining and confirming competence.

5.6.24 DF noted that the On-Call Improvement Programme had supported and delivered the recruitment of 54 On-Call support Watch Commanders, introduced bank working arrangements and localised modular training to help recruitment and retention. As a result, the On-Call target operating model was becoming less effective as a reference point for the Service.

5.6.25 The Board queried how and when the viability of proposed On-Call arrangements would be assessed and whether gateway reviews, defined timeframes or what governance oversight would be used if progress was not achieved. DF advised that review points and parameters would be set out in the business case for each proposal once authority to proceed had been granted. He noted that while the options had been assessed against agreed criteria and identified as the most appropriate for the areas concerned, further work was needed to test wider employability and assess each case on its own merits before moving forward.

5.6.26 The Board queried whether the recent On-Call contract banding changes had affected availability or recruitment. DF advised that the expected improvement in availability had not yet been seen and that appropriate contract management at station level remained important. LG noted that the new arrangements had provided existing staff with greater flexibility to move to lower contract levels due to changes in personal circumstances which

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had helped to retain some individuals. The changes had also allowed local managers to target community members who could offer more limited availability, as previously this had been difficult under the former contractual requirements.

- 5.6.27 The Board recognised that the new contract model had helped sustain On-Call employment and that further benefits from the On-Call Improvement Programme may emerge over time. DF confirmed that the new contract arrangements allowed for more targeted discussions with potential recruits around the specific hours needed, or they could provide. DF noted that local managers should make full use of the different contract types and consider how they could be blended across stations and areas. The Board suggested that the Service could approach former staff who left due to previous contractual requirements. DF noted and agreed that this could be considered.
- 5.6.28 The Board queried whether demographic data had been used to consider locating stations/appliances based on improved recruitment prospects of On-Call firefighters rather than response times. DF advised that the On-Call Improvement Programme had examined strategic mobilising locations and potential hub and satellite stations alongside the ability to crew them. He noted that the strength and location of available personnel and mixed crewing options had been considered.
- 5.6.29 The Board commented on the ability to recruit On-Call firefighters in areas with high housing costs, specifically Helensburgh, Milngavie and Hawick, and asked whether any assurance or learning could be taken from other fire and rescue services. DF advised that two of the locations mentioned had existing On-Call crews and the focus would be to supplement them where needed. He noted that no firm conclusions could be drawn on a link between housing costs and recruitment until the approach had been tested. SS reminded the Board that the Service had introduced and established new On-Call systems, with Livingston being the example.
- 5.6.30 Firefighter Safety, Wellbeing and Welfare
DF advised that another concern raised during the consultation related to firefighter safety, welfare and wellbeing. In particular, concerns were raised that increased response times for second and third pumps could affect firefighter safety by making it harder to maintain safe systems of work or apply standard operating procedures. DF noted that the temporary appliance withdrawals had provided useful insight into how this would work and demonstrated the Service's ability to maintain safe systems of work and standard operating procedures with reduced resources. Evaluation and assessment of these areas had not identified any direct correlation between the changes and firefighter safety concerns. There had been no increase in health and safety events, accidents or injuries reported as a result of the changes and operational assurance processes had not identified evidence of any compromise to firefighter safety. DF noted that the reinvestment of released posts would support firefighter safety by strengthening the training provision to ensure a well-trained, well-equipped workforce. As part of the SDR programme, advice and input had been sought from health, safety and wellbeing subject matter experts.
- 5.6.31 The Board sought assurance that the recommendations would not restrict promotional opportunities. DF confirmed that there were no proposed reductions in supervisory management roles. DF noted that while some individual stations may have fewer local opportunities for promotion, the wider change programme would create more varied pathways nationally across a range of posts.
- 5.6.32 New Developments and Risk and Demand
DF advised that another concern raised during the consultation related to new developments and risk and demand. DF confirmed that the Service would consider new developments, local risk and operational demand when implementing SDR options. He advised that consultation concerns related to hazardous sites, housing growth, population

change, non-domestic development and land-use changes. The Service had reviewed these matters in collaboration with external partner agencies including the relevant local authorities planning departments. It was noted that on their own, new developments/change of use could not reliably predict future incident demand. The Service would continue to use national and local evidence, CRIM refreshes and learning to ensure changes in built environment and community risks were captured and considered during any option implementation planning phase. DF highlighted the need to distinguish between perceived risk and actual service demand, noting that overall demand had reduced over the last decade, albeit the nature of demand had shifted. Prevention activity remained central to reducing risks supported by home fire safety visits, non-domestic fire safety audits, and Scotland's strengthened domestic fire safety standards. Should the SDR options progress, local engagement, risk-based prevention activity and further feasibility work would support implementation.

- 5.6.33 The Board sought clarification on how the New and Emerging Risks Group's work would ensure up to date relevant information would be made available as the Service moved into the delivery phase of the options. JH advised that overall trends and figures were positive, however the Service had to continue to anticipate and respond to changing risk. He explained that the New and Emerging Risks Group, wider partnership working and prevention governance arrangements would help to ensure emerging information feeds into established processes. Intelligence from community safety visits, fire safety audits and other sources was shared with preparedness teams and translated into practical guidance for frontline crews. JH noted that these embedded processes would continue to evolve as further learning develops and that partnership working remained central to supporting communities.
- 5.6.34 The Board sought clarification on when/if future developments would impact on increased operational demand. DF advised that it would be difficult to assign a numerical value for when developments would materially increase risk as there were several factors that would have to be considered. He emphasised the need to distinguish between risk and demand, noting that risk assessments considered both likelihood and impact, whilst demand related to the Service's ability to respond effectively within available capacity. The Service had considered the communities and local authorities concerns; however wider factors would continue to influence the overall risk assessment. JH noted the population had increased over the past decade, however incident demand, dwelling fires, casualties and fatalities had reduced. He emphasised that despite these positive trends, the Service does not rely solely on modelling and would continue to identify and support high-risk individuals within communities. He noted that the prevention strategy had shifted from broad numerical targets towards a more targeted approach with a focus on most at risk/in need of advice.
- 5.6.35 The Board questioned whether the proposals would strengthen the Service's ability to respond to the growing number of high-risk, high-demand households. JH advised that targeted prevention activity relied heavily on partnership working and that advancing age was one of the several risk factors considered. DF noted that the Service's active role in community planning aided its understanding of changing risk and demand, helped to monitor incident trends and ensured that it could retain appropriate capacity to respond effectively within communities.
- 5.6.36 The Board sought clarification on the expected completion timescales for cladding remediation work and how the timescales aligned with the five-year SDR implementation timetable. DF confirmed that cladding remediation work had been treated as a current risk within the SDR process and that the timescales would be considered alongside implementation planning. JH advised that the Service continued to engage with Scottish Government and partners on legislative and prevention activity following Grenfell and all relevant information continued to be shared through operational systems to support frontline crews. He noted that remediation timescales varied by building, risk and location,

and would remain under active consideration and review.

- 5.6.37 The Board sought assurance that specific implications of residential and commercial developments had been considered for each option and reflected in the supporting data and recommendations. DF confirmed that these factors had broadly been considered and advised that any areas requiring further work would be highlighted as the options were reviewed. He noted that levels of risk were influenced by a range of factors including new building standards, re-industrialisation and wider changes to Scotland's risk profile. All factors needed to be considered which added to the complexity of this area. He further noted that modern developments, processes and commercial premises were designed, constructed and managed to improved standards.
- 5.6.38 CRIM Modelling
For public record, it was acknowledged that the Board had received extensive assurance on CRIM over several years and had been provided with substantial information throughout its development. It was clarified that the Board had no concerns with the robustness of the CRIM. However, due to the recurring theme around CRIM throughout the consultation process, the Board had the opportunity to seek additional assurance.
- 5.6.39 DF advised that the consultation feedback had focused on scepticism about how the modelling, wider data and supporting assumptions/decision had been made. He confirmed that the Service used specialist operational modelling and community risk analysis to provide robust evidence in the assessment of potential changes to the distribution of fire stations, pumping appliances and duty systems. The operating model had used real SFRS incidents and appliance data to create a base model that reflected and simulated over 100 years of operational activity. This allowed scenarios to be compared against likely impacts on response times, workload and service delivery.
- 5.6.40 DF noted that the modelling provided valuable evidence for comparing options however it must be considered alongside its assumptions and limitations. The system could not fully predict future rare or unprecedented demand, short-term appliance availability, weather conditions or wider operational changes. The CRIM was a robust, peer-reviewed model that identified community risk at data-zone level and was annually refreshed using updated mapping, household classification and incident data. The CRIM was an iterative learning model and would continue to support prevention, preparedness and future SDR implementation. DF further noted that the CRIM was intended to support the appropriate redistribution of resources in line with risk and demand and not a tool to reduce the overall size of the Service.
- 5.6.41 The Board noted the feedback from staff and suggested that there would be value in further engagement to raise awareness of the CRIM outwith the SDR process.
- 5.6.42 The Board noted that the 2023 baseline reflected demand at that point in time but questioned whether the subsequent temporary appliance withdrawals and changes to Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) attendance had changed demand levels in some areas. DF confirmed that the demand levels had changed however the risk remained the same.
- 5.6.43 The Board sought clarification on the additional value of the introduction of DSDS in areas where modelling had suggested the On-Call model would provide the best balance of resources. DF advised that whilst modelling had identified On-Call provision was appropriate in some areas, there remained clear benefits to maintaining a wholetime presence. These included improved daytime resilience, guaranteed availability during periods when incidents are more likely, enhanced community engagement and prevention activity, and stronger local relationships through consistent daily contact. He noted that the additional resources were considered justified as they would provide wider resilience benefits beyond those captured in the modelling.

- 5.6.44 The Board sought clarification whether the five-year timescale for addressing RAAC remediation works was an internal or external requirement. It was confirmed that this was an internal requirement.

(The meeting broke at 1225 hrs and reconvened at 1325 hrs.)

The Board were advised that individual options would be introduced by DF, who would highlight key details, recommendation and rationale and SS would confirm the SLT's recommendation.

5.7 **Long Term Dormant Stations without Employees**
5.7.1 **Nethy Bridge**

DF advised that the recommended option for Nethy Bridge was to close the long-term dormant station. Consultation feedback focused mainly on requests for equipment or enhanced local support. DF confirmed that the Service recognised the community's perception of loss, however, the station had made no operational contribution since 2014. The historic capability was limited and emergency cover was maintained by neighbouring fire stations. No disproportionate equality impacts had been identified, and no viable alternatives had been proposed through consultation that met the required legal or operational criteria.

- 5.7.2 SS advised that the option was recommended due to inability to provide a response and recruitment efforts having been exhausted. Retaining the station would place avoidable pressure on the capital investment backlog without delivering any corresponding operational benefit. The equality impact assessments identified no disproportionate impacts, and the consultation and operational analysis confirmed the associated risk and resource position. SLT reviewed all of the information in detail and supported the recommendation presented in the report.
- 5.7.3 A Board member, who attended the consultation event, felt reassured that the consultation feedback and the documented considerations accurately reflected their recollection. Whilst there had been acceptance of the proposed course of action, the main concern from the community focussed on seeking reassurance around continued local support, prevention work, basic equipment and maintaining a valued presence in the area.
- 5.7.4 The Board sought assurance regarding planning, prevention activities and deployment for surrounding stations/resources to maintain cover and support for the affected communities.
- 5.7.5 DF advised that this had formed part of the consideration and reiterated that since 2014, cover and prevention activity within this area had been provided by surrounding stations or dedicated resources, with similar arrangements considered across the other long-term dormant station options.
- 5.7.6 The Board noted that the Case for Change stated closure would remove the running costs associated with the Community Response Unit, however, the detail was not reflected within the financial information. The Board suggested that this information should be included within the original document and asked for clarity that the asset would be removed from the capital backlog. SO'D advised that the case for change referred to the capital impact, including £2.5 million in avoided costs, however, it did not detail the running costs as these were minimal. The additional information requested was therefore provided and noted during discussions.

5.7.7 **Ratagan**

DF advised that the recommended option for Ratagan was to close the long-term dormant station. Consultation feedback from the Ratagan community focused on provision of equipment and volunteer training, and these concerns were acknowledged. From an operational perspective, the station has made no contribution since 2013, with cover continuing to be maintained by neighbouring stations. The consultation had not identified any lawful or operationally viable alternative, and the equality impacts had been assessed as limited and manageable.

5.7.8 SS advised that the rationale was consistent with the Nethy Bridge option and that the mitigations had been assessed. SLT reviewed all information in detail and supported the recommendation presented in the report.

5.7.9 **Isle of Muck**

DF advised that the recommended option for Isle of Muck was to close the long-term dormant station. Consultation feedback from the community raised concerns about resilience and equipment. From an operational perspective, the station had made no recorded incidents since 2009/10 and had historically a very low demand. The closure of the long-term dormant station would not materially change the current service delivery provision.

5.7.10 SS advised that SLT supported the recommendation and had been assured that the relevant issues had been considered and appropriate mitigations identified.

5.7.11 The Board requested a future session to consider how the Service responds to island communities following implementation of the recommendations, including any additional assurance required in relation to mitigation plans. (Post meeting note: Added to Strategy Day Programme).

5.7.12 **Fetlar**

DF advised that the recommendation for Fetlar was to close the long-term dormant station. Strong community views had been expressed, including requests for equipment, volunteer arrangements and domestic extinguishers to be provided. These suggestions were considered but cannot be supported within the current legal and operational framework. Operationally, the station has made no contribution since 2011. Demand was very low and there was no realistic prospect of establishing a sustainable crew.

5.7.13 SS advised that the SLT supported the recommendation based on the facts outlined.

5.7.14 The Board commented on the constructive local engagement. The Board questioned whether visitor/tourist safety could be addressed as part of the assurance work.

5.7.15 DF confirmed that engagement on fire safety could specifically include visitor safety and noted that it was incumbent for businesses and individuals for maintaining appropriate fire safety arrangements. DF advised that the island response plans remain in place to respond, however, despite the identified risks, there has not been sustained operational demand for an extended period. DF noted that suggestions from Fetlar included providing equipment without training, however, the Service could not do that.

5.7.16 JH stated that there would be engagement with the local community and businesses and highlighted the national duty holder campaign which was due to commence across Scotland. The campaign would include seminars targeted at specific risks and geographic areas such as remote areas and that this would complement the targeted activity linked to SDR and its follow-up work.

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- 5.7.17 If the recommendation was approved and the asset was to be disposed of in future, the Board noted that a community asset transfer should be considered if this would deliver better outcomes for the community rather than a potential capital receipt for the Service.
- 5.7.18 **Crianlarich**
DF advised that the recommended option for Crianlarich was to close the long-term dormant station. The consultation had highlighted co-location and partnership opportunities, as well as concerns relating to prevention activity. Operationally, the station had made no contribution since 2016 and sustained recruitment failure had prevented viability. No disproportionate equality impacts were identified, and service cover would be maintained by neighbouring resources.
- 5.7.19 The Board noted that feedback had identified forestry as a consideration in the area and sought assurance that both the Forestry and Land Scotland and the National Park Authority in the Trossachs had been specifically consulted on the proposals. DF confirmed that both Forestry and Land Scotland and the National Park Authority had been contacted and given the opportunity to respond to the consultation. There was no record of a response from either organisation through the online survey or in any substantive response outside that process. However, a separate meeting had been held with senior planning managers at the National Park Authority.
- 5.7.20 If the recommendation was approved and the asset was to be disposed of in future, the Board noted that a community asset transfer should be considered if this would deliver better outcomes for the community rather than a potential capital receipt for the Service. The Board acknowledged that, for some premises, this may be impractical or not suitable for community use.
- 5.7.21 **Having considered all Long Term Dormant Stations without Employees, the Board approved the overarching recommendation to close Nethy Bridge, Ratagan, Isle of Muck, Fetlar and Crianlarich.**
- 5.7.22 **Long Term Dormant Stations with Employees and No Applicants**
Colintraive
DF advised that the recommended option for Colintraive was to close the long term dormant station. However, the key distinction was that there was an existing employee in post; therefore, the recommendation was not for immediate closure. Consultation feedback had focused on equipment and local support. No legally or operationally viable alternatives had been identified. Operationally, the station had made no contribution since 2013, and evidence did not support maintaining the station with the response model.
- 5.7.23 SS confirmed that the SLT supported the recommendation for this station.
- 5.7.24 The Board sought assurance that CalMac had been specifically consulted on the proposals. DF confirmed that CalMac had been contacted directly as a key stakeholder during the promotion of the consultation in June 2025. No response had been received from CalMac through the online survey or by any other substantive means.
- 5.7.25 **Corriecravie**
DF advised that the recommended option for Corriecravie was to close the long term dormant station. However, the key distinction was that there were two employees in post; therefore, the recommendation was not for immediate closure. Consultation feedback had focused on response cover and request for locally stationed equipment, however these cannot be supported within the current safety and duty of care requirements of the Service. Operationally, the station had made no contribution since 2022.
- 5.7.26 SS confirmed that the SLT supported the recommendation for this station.

- 5.7.27 The Board noted the potential for redeployment through the transition from voluntary duty system terms to retained duty system. The Board queried whether there was any previous experience of this approach and if any significant challenges had been identified should this be considered. DF confirmed that there were no current examples, however, legacy services had previously amended terms and conditions as part of transitions between volunteer and On-Call arrangements. DF noted that there may be opportunities to retain and redeploy skills of affected personnel and indicated that the main challenges would relate to the application of the duty system and location requirements. DF advised that the Service remained open to transferring existing skills where this was appropriate and feasible.
- 5.7.28 SS clarified that the recommendation presented was to approve commencement of redundancy consultation for personnel at Colintrave and Corriecravie. Due to the novel and contentious nature of the matter, the outcome would be brought back to the Board for final consideration and approval.
- 5.7.29 **Having considered all Long-Term Dormant Stations with Employees and No Applicants, the Board approved the overarching recommendation to commence redundancy consultation with affected staff on the potential closure of Colintrave and Corriecravie.**
- 5.7.30 **Long Term Dormant Station with Employees and Applicants
Isle of Kerrera**
DF advised that the recommended option for Isle of Kerrera was to close the long term dormant station. Consultation feedback raised concerns about wildfire equipment, volunteer response and community resilience arrangements. It was queried whether the small appliance based at Oban was suitable for the single-vehicle ferry and confirmation had been provided. Operationally, there had been no response capability since April 2020, and only two incidents had been reported in the seven-year period from 2018/19 to 2024/25. The final report concluded that, despite having employees and applicants, there was insufficient potential for long-term sustainability.
- 5.7.31 The Board sought clarity on the proposed timeline for consultation on redundancy processes. LG advised that the timescale was variable and would depend on whether affected employees identified any alternatives to redundancy and the time required for these to be fully considered. LG noted that the process would be expected to conclude within a few months.
- 5.7.32 SS noted that SLT had carefully considered and challenged the proposal to proceed despite the presence of potential applicants. SS advised that SLT supported the assessment that the station had been dormant for several years, had no demand and would not be sustainable in future. SS advised that, in line with the rationale for the SDR review, the recommended approach was to proceed with redundancy consultation with existing members of staff. Similar to the previous options, the matter would return to the Board for final approval, due to its potentially novel and contentious nature.
- 5.7.33 **Having considered all Long-Term Dormant Stations with Employees and Applicants, the Board approved the recommendation to commence redundancy consultation with affected staff on the potential closure of Isle of Kerrera.**
- 5.7.34 **Perth & Kinross (Perth)**
DF advised that the recommended option was to replace Perth's third appliance, a Combined Aerial Rescue Pump (CARP) with a dedicated High Reach Appliance (HRA). DF reminded the Board that since September 2023, the third appliance (CARP) had been temporarily withdrawn and provided an interim dedicated high-reach capability. The recommended option would make this temporary arrangement permanent by replacing the CARP with a dedicated high-reach appliance. Consultation feedback questioned

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whether the station could operate as a wider rescue hub and recognised its strategic importance due to its location. There was strong operational evidence to support making the temporary arrangement permanent, as actual response times had exceeded modelled expectations and provided confidence in the current configuration. The permanent transition from a CARP to a dedicated HRA was considered operationally appropriate and deliverable, with no disproportionate quality impacts identified.

- 5.7.35 Crews at Perth Fire Station expressed concerns over resilience, the reduction in training opportunities, climate related incidents and historical demand. Incident data did not support these assumptions. Crews, however, did recognise the benefit of a dedicated height appliance over a CARP and were keen to see this appliance being introduced into the station.
- 5.7.36 The Board queried whether support staff based in stations had been captured through the Corporate Services Review, or otherwise recorded within support staff structures, to ensure there was clarity on their location, role and headcount accountability. SO'D advised that, whilst this was not specific to Perth, support staff were able to work flexibly from stations, regional offices or national headquarters. If a building were no longer available, suitable alternative accommodation would be sought for affected staff.
- 5.7.37 It was confirmed that the proposal would formalise the earlier temporary withdrawal of pumping capability by moving to the preferred model of a dedicated height appliance. SS confirmed that SLT had considered the points set out by DF, alongside stakeholder and staff feedback and had also taken account of the evaluation of the temporary appliance withdrawal in operation since 2023. On that basis, SS confirmed that the SLT supported the recommended option.
- 5.7.38 The Board sought confirmation that the three-year temporary arrangement had not resulted in any significant adverse impact as a result. DF confirmed that there had been no significant adverse impact.
- 5.7.39 **The Board approved the recommendation to replace the third appliance at Perth, currently a combined aerial rescue pump (CARP) with a dedicated high reach appliance (HRA).**
- 5.7.40 **Scottish Borders (Hawick, Galashiels)**
DF advised that, in the Scottish Borders, the option consulted on was to introduce DSDS crewing for the first pumping appliance at Hawick Station. This appliance would be crewed by wholetime firefighters during day shift hours (Monday to Friday 0800-1800 hrs) and by On-Call firefighters outwith those hours. The second pumping appliance would continue to be crewed by On-Call firefighters. In addition, a nucleus crew of wholetime firefighters would be introduced at Galashiels Station and tactically deployed across a defined cluster of stations during day shift hours, when On-Call availability was most challenging. This would supplement the two existing appliances, with one crewed by wholetime firefighters and the other by On-Call firefighters.
- 5.7.41 DF advised that Hawick was one of the Service's RAAC stations which was suitable for repair and refurbishment. Hawick had the second-lowest operational demand among stations of its type, with 1,927 mobilisations over the five-year period from 2018/19 to 2022/23. As a comparison, Bathgate, the highest-demand station of the same configuration, recorded 8,401 mobilisations over the same period. This equates to Hawick experiencing around 22% of Bathgate's mobilisation demand. Hawick's demand was more aligned to the busiest On-Call stations elsewhere in Scotland, less than the busiest one and two pump On-Call stations. There are eight solely On-Call stations with greater demand, three of which had only one appliance, than the existing one pump, wholetime and one pump On-Call model at Hawick.

- 5.7.42 Consultation feedback and public meeting responses were significant, strong and negative with community members perceiving the proposal as a loss of local resources. The main operational concern related to resilience, particularly second-pump resilience and water rescue capability. DF noted that operationally, the recommendation aligned resources more closely to risk and demand, whilst deliberately providing resilience beyond the modelling baseline and recognising local feedback through DSDS rather than a fully On-Call model. The current strong On-Call provision provided confidence that the proposed model would be effective.
- 5.7.43 Specific future risk concerns were raised in relation to the new Center Parcs development. Following research and engagement with Center Parcs senior management, the Service concluded that the site, in line with existing Center Parcs locations, would present low risk to the public, staff and emergency services due to robust fire safety infrastructure, comprehensive risk management arrangements and effective internal response systems. Incident numbers at current UK and Ireland sites are minimal and generally minor. The Hawick site would be smaller in guest capacity but would have enhanced safety standards and was expected to maintain this low risk profile. The Service would be able to provide a rapid response regardless of the station's crewing model. A useful comparison was drawn with the much larger Center Parcs site at Penrith in Cumbria where the local fire station had successfully operated the DSDS model since 2022.
- 5.7.44 Station crews raised practical considerations about how the DSDS would operate. Although this was a recognised UK model, the specific arrangements would be finalised with representative bodies in Scotland. Station personnel opposed the proposal and also sought clarity on how redeployment, transfers and wider staffing matters would be managed should the change proceed. Depending on the version of the DSDS adopted, the change was likely to release 12 to 17 posts, which could be redeployed to support the Scottish Borders more broadly.
- 5.7.45 The Board sought clarification on the scope of DSDS options being explored and the timescales for the process through to implementation. DF advised that the consultation had focussed on a Monday-Friday, 0800-1800 hrs model. However, feedback had prompted consideration of variations, including adjusting start and finish times to better align with activity patterns and a seven day model. JH advised that a formal offer had been submitted to the FBU for consideration requesting a formal response by 13 July 2026. The offer included two variations of the five-day system, one with 10-hour shifts starting at either 0800 hrs or 0900 hrs and the other being a seven-day system involving two watches working 12-hour shifts from 0700-1900 hrs.
- 5.7.46 The Board acknowledged that the consultation feedback had been carefully considered and had directly influenced the development of the proposals.
- 5.7.47 The Board sought clarity on the potential relocation support the Service would provide affected personnel. LG advised that the Service had an existing relocation policy and was regularly used for both existing employees relocating within the country and for external recruits moving to join the Service. It was noted that travel costs would also be considered.
- 5.7.48 The Board noted that Hawick was a RAAC station and had been identified as suitable for remediation. The Board sought clarification on whether this work would be progressed through the capital programme. DS confirmed that the associated remediation costs, estimated £3.65 million per station, had been included within the current capital programme of works and had been factored into the programme's affordability and deliverability.

- 5.7.49 The Board queried whether the DSDS options would provide sufficient additional wholetime resilience and whether the nucleus crewing option would be explored further. JH advised that the DSDS negotiations had not specifically included discussion of nucleus crewing, so that had not yet been explored in detail. JH noted that the purpose of nucleus crewing would be to provide additional support to On-Call stations across a wider region and indicated that there were several ways this could be achieved through a DSDS crew.
- 5.7.50 The Board sought assurance that the population and community risk analysis would be used to prioritise prevention and other support for affected communities who would experience increased response times and how this would be provided. JH noted that this would be monitored through existing governance arrangements, including scrutiny by the Service Delivery Committee and ongoing review and evaluation of the prevention strategy.
- 5.7.51 The Board sought assurance that should local circumstances change, particularly in relation to wholetime cover, the Service would retain the option to reinvest additional wholetime resources. SS confirmed that this was accurate and noted that the SDR was an ongoing process. Should risk and demand change, the Service must ensure that resources continue to be allocated according to impact, risk and demand.
- 5.7.52 SS noted that one point raised through the consultation responses indicated that Hawick was presented as one of the most industrialised areas within the Scottish Borders. The Board sought explicit assurance that all industrial risks associated with the area had been considered in developing the proposed options. DF confirmed that was the case and noted that the area has been compared with other parts of Scotland with similar levels of risk and demand, many of which are served by On-Call provision alone.
- 5.7.53 SS recognised the concerns raised by the communities affected and valued the engagement and suggestions provided throughout the process. SS noted that their feedback on the proposals had shaped the options presented today and concerns relating to nucleus crewing would inform the Service's thinking on how this could be taken forward. SS further noted that these decisions had not been taken lightly and the Service had considered evidence, the supporting materials, and site-specific analysis. On that basis, SS advised that the proposed recommendation was to proceed and commit to exploring a range of DSDS and On-Call support options.
- 5.7.54 The Board noted that the modelling had suggested a full On-Call model would have been appropriate but for reasons outlined, the recommendation was to move to a DSDS, the nature of which would be determined through negotiation.
- 5.7.55 **The Board approved the introduction of Day Shift Duty System crewing for the first pumping appliance at Hawick station with the second pumping appliance crewed by On-Call firefighters and as an amendment to the proposed nucleus crew at Galashiels, there was a commitment to explore arrangements for deploying additional wholetime employees in support of On-Call availability during day-shift hours when this is most challenging.**
- 5.7.56 **Argyll & Bute (Helensburgh)**
DF advised that the recommended option for Helensburgh was to introduce an alternative duty system for the first appliance, which was currently crewed by wholetime firefighters. The first appliance would be crewed by wholetime firefighters during day shift hours (0800-1800 hrs from Monday to Friday) and On-Call firefighters outwith those hours. The second On-Call appliance would remain unchanged. DF advised that Helensburgh was one of the Service's RAAC stations which was suitable for repair and refurbishment. Helensburgh had the lowest operational demand of all stations of its type, with 1,827 mobilisations over the five-year period from 2018/19 to 2022/23. As a comparison, Bathgate, the highest-demand station of the same configuration, recorded 8,401

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mobilisations over the same period. This equates to Helensburgh experiencing around 21% of Bathgate's mobilisation demand. There were ten solely On-Call stations with greater demand, three of which only have one appliance.

- 5.7.57 Consultation feedback and public sentiment was strongly negative with the main concerns relating to response times and safety. Of the 326 people who responded to the survey, there were 41 who had supported the proposals as a practical balance of daytime cover with flexible On-Call use and trusted SFRS to adjust if needed.
- 5.7.58 The consultation also raised concern about specific high-risk sites, including Faslane, and those concerns had been explored in depth. The Faslane naval base and the depot were heavily protected Ministry of Defence sites with their on site fire and rescue provision supported by regulated emergency response plans and partnership working with the Service through local resilience arrangements, training and exercising. Incident activity at Faslane had been very low with only three recorded incidents in the five years between 2019/20 and 2024/25. Two of those incidents were false alarms and the Service had not been required for the other incident.
- 5.7.59 Helensburgh may support any response as part of a dynamic mobilising arrangement but would not always necessarily be the nearest available appliance to these sites. The operational rationale was that the DSDS and On-Call model better aligned response with demand whilst maintaining appropriate resilience and supporting the wider rebalancing. The liberated posts (approximately 12-17) would be redeployed into prevention, training and operational delivery. Staff feedback highlighted concerns over On-Call availability at the station and that a wholetime resource was essential for the risk in that area.
- 5.7.60 The Board noted that Helensburgh was a RAAC station and had been identified as suitable for remediation. The Board sought clarification whether this work would be progressed through the capital programme. DS confirmed that the associated remediation costs were included within the current capital programme of works.
- 5.7.61 The Board queried whether there had been any concerns raised by the Ministry of Defence and requested additional detail on the partnership working and joint planning. DF indicated that he was not aware of any specific concerns raised. DF advised that the Local Senior Officer and wider local team worked closely with the Ministry of Defence, and training and exercising arrangements were well established locally. DF noted that all watches undertook site familiarisation and these would continue under the proposed station model. The station would also maintain its relationship with those sites, although operational demand does not reflect the perceived level of risk in the area.
- 5.7.62 The Board queried when contingency planning would begin should sufficient personnel not be secured to support the On-Call or DSDS model. The Board highlighted the need for a clearly defined timeframe, noting that should the proposed model progress as intended, an alternative solution would be required to address the RAAC issues at the station. DF acknowledged the concerns about the On-Call element, which had also been reflected in the consultation feedback. DF noted that, unlike Hawick, Helensburgh does not have the same level of On-Call availability. However, weeknight availability was strong in the area, whilst weekday availability remains more challenging. DF further noted that the On-Call appliance had mobilised only 30 times in the previous year. Further work would be needed to test the contractual arrangements for the ten On-Call staff at Helensburgh to assess their ability to provide additional availability.
- 5.7.63 The Board noted consultation feedback referenced the impact of Covid-19 on the data and questioned whether there was anything to note. DF advised that Covid-19 had been raised during staff engagement as a potential factor affecting the data. However, the Service had been clear throughout the public consultation and staff engagement that incident patterns changed during that period, but trends and patterns had returned to

those seen previously post Covid.

- 5.7.64 The Board noted that feedback had referred to the possibility of a 24-hour shift pattern and queried whether this was a viable option for consideration. LG advised that the main complexities would relate to working time regulations, balancing the 24-hour working pattern with statutory rest periods, wellbeing of personnel and sustainability. JH noted that there were some UK services who operate 24-hour working patterns successfully. However, this had not been explored as part of the current negotiations, although it could be considered in future.
- 5.7.65 The Board requested further detail on the relationship between dual contracts and the banding system and sought clarity on why this had been raised as an area of concern. DF explained that the introduction of new terms and conditions and the banding system had meant that limits had been placed on the banding in which dual contracts could work to ensure sufficient rest periods and this had not been universally welcomed. However, the decision had been supported by representative bodies to ensure appropriate rest for staff.
- 5.7.66 The Board queried whether the adoption of the DSDS would prevent individuals from providing On-Call cover during that period. DF advised that availability would depend on individual circumstances, including rest periods and whether individuals had been mobilised. DF provided examples of existing staff currently working in day duty roles, who were also providing On-Call cover.
- 5.7.67 The Board queried whether the 69 posts liberated from wholetime duty could potentially support dual contracts. DF confirmed that this could be possible, depending on where individuals lived and whether they were close enough to an On-Call station to provide availability.
- 5.7.68 The Board sought assurance that all SDR papers, including the consultation response and supporting raw data, had been published on the Service website. DF confirmed that the 3,000 consultation responses and associated raw data were available on the website within the SDR section of the website.
- 5.7.69 SS acknowledged the concerns raised by communities and reiterated the value of the feedback and engagement received, noting that this had influenced elements of the proposal. As part of the SLT assurance process, response times, On-Call availability and additional assurance around Faslane had been considered. SS advised that SLT was content with the information provided and therefore recommended proceeding with the option.
- 5.7.70 **The Board approved the introduction of an alternative duty system for the first appliance at Helensburgh, which was currently crewed by wholetime firefighters. This would see that appliance crewed by wholetime firefighters on a Day Shift Duty System and crewed by On-Call firefighters out with these hours. The second On-Call appliance would remain unchanged.**
- 5.7.71 **East Dunbartonshire (Milngavie)**
DF advised that the recommended option for Milngavie was to introduce an alternative DSDS for the appliance which was currently crewed by wholetime firefighters. The proposals were to crew the appliance with wholetime firefighters during day shift hours (0800-1800 hrs Monday to Friday) and with On-Call firefighters outwith those hours. DF advised that Milngavie was one of the Service's RAAC stations which was suitable for repair and remediation. Milngavie had the lowest demand of all one-pump wholetime stations in Scotland. The operational rationale was that demand was very low for a wholetime model and the proposed configuration would provide a proportionate and resilient response aligned with neighbouring stations. Modelling and demand suggested

that the station could operate solely as On-Call. However, staff and public consultation feedback strongly opposed change with concerns focusing mainly on increased response times and resilience outside daytime hours. The ability to recruit and retain On-Call staff in an area with high house prices and competition from local employers was also raised. It was acknowledged that establishing On-Call capability where none currently exists could present implementation challenges. Staff also noted that the only perceived positive aspect was the potential for organisational financial savings. However, there was some acknowledgement that a DSDS shift pattern could improve work-life balance by removing evening and weekend commitments.

- 5.7.72 SS advised that the SLT recommended proceeding with the proposed option.
- 5.7.73 The Board queried whether there would be flexibility to consider the DSDS and On-Call timings to better match actual demand, noting that this had been raised during consultation feedback and at engagement sessions. DF advised that this aligned with the wider discussion on DSDS stations. DF noted that staff feedback had highlighted that start and finish times should be considered carefully for a range of reasons.
- 5.7.74 The Board noted the significant reduction in UFAS incidents at this station, meaning actual demand was even lower than the data had previously indicated. DF noted that there had been a significant reduction in UFAS incidents and attendances in the Milngavie area and across the Service. DF further noted that based on current figures, Milngavie remains the lowest-demand wholtime one-pump station in Scotland.
- 5.7.75 The Board referred to a motion by East Dunbartonshire Council to consider a feasibility study for a potential major emergency centre in the locality and queried whether any further information had been received from the Council on this matter. The Board suggested that if no update was available, the Service should seek to establish whether the Council had progressed the feasibility study.
- 5.7.76 DF noted that several options considered feasibility studies for potential co-location hubs with other agencies, which the Service would continue to pursue through the collaboration group. The Board noted that this remained an interesting concept and suggested that it could be explored separately from the SDR process.
- 5.7.77 **The Board approved the introduction of an alternative duty system for the appliance at Milngavie, which is currently crewed by wholtime firefighters. This would see the appliance crewed by wholtime firefighters on a Day Shift Duty System and crewed by On-Call firefighters out with these hours.**
- 5.7.78 **Edinburgh and East Lothian (Marionville, Newcraighall, Musselburgh, Tranent)**
DF advised that the recommended option covering Edinburgh and East Lothian was to close Marionville Fire Station, relocating its wholtime single appliance to Newcraighall to provide two wholtime appliances there, and to close Musselburgh Fire Station, moving one wholtime appliance to a new build station in the Tranent area, creating a two appliance station with one wholtime and one On-Call appliance. DF further advised that Marionville and Tranent were two of the Service's RAAC stations which both required repair or alternative arrangements. Musselburgh was in a location that was not beneficial since Newcraighall opened in the 1990s. Marionville was in close proximity to McDonald Road. Combining these four stations into two would create a more effective distribution of operational resources across east Edinburgh and East Lothian. Newcraighall had recently benefited from a £2.6 million upgrade and could accommodate a second wholtime appliance. With an additional appliance at Newcraighall, there would be limited operational benefit in retaining Musselburgh on its current site which was also considered unfit for purpose. Tranent must be rebuilt and this would create an opportunity to develop a new station in that area and relocate the Musselburgh wholtime appliance there. The evidence supported proceeding in East Lothian, as incident growth and response-time

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performance indicate that relocating the appliance to a new-build station in Tranent with an additional wholetime dayshift resource would benefit the area. This would also support On-Call capacity and wider resilience.

- 5.7.79 The East Lothian components were well received at local public meetings with feedback that the area required more rather than less fire cover. The options consulted on did not reduce resources just adjusted their deployment and proposed to add an additional appliance to the area.
- 5.7.80 There was significant public and political opposition to the Marionville option. The feedback focused on concerns about population growth, station location and RAAC remediation works. The Edinburgh City Plan 2040 and East Lothian Local Development Plan 2 both indicated continued population growth and spatial expansion across the affected area. Concerns relating to response times in the current Marionville station area were also raised alongside the view that the option did not fully account for risks associated with industrial/high-risk sites in Leith and north Edinburgh. Marionville staff strongly opposed the proposal and preferred that the station be rebuilt or modernised. Staff also requested that resources be redirected towards strengthening training and prevention activity across the Service.
- 5.7.81 SS advised that it would be helpful to consider the East Lothian and Edinburgh components separately. SS highlighted that the revised proposals reflected the Service's consideration of consultation feedback and additional information received in relation to both areas.
- 5.7.82 In relation to East Lothian, SS confirmed that the recommendation was to proceed with an additional DSDS resource to be located within East Lothian to support wider regional resilience.
- 5.7.83 In relation to the Marionville option, SS advised that the recommendation was not to proceed with the Edinburgh component at this stage. SS noted that the consultation feedback had raised substantial thoughtful and relevant issues requiring further consideration. In particular, there were emerging and existing factors/risks within Edinburgh that required further assurances before the Service could proceed or rely on the response times set out in the Case for Change. As previously referenced, these factors included significant commercial, residential and industrial developments in the Marionville and wider Edinburgh area. SS stated that he was not assured that the resulting level of emerging risk had been fully considered or quantified to an extent that would support closure of the city-centre station. Further points raised through consultation, including alternative sites and condition surveys, would also be considered through detailed analysis and modelling of the Edinburgh area and potential station locations. For the reasons stated, SS advised that it would not be appropriate to proceed with the Edinburgh component until that work had been completed and the relevant information obtained.
- 5.7.84 The Board were advised that the East Lothian element would be considered first and the Marionville and wider Edinburgh city aspect would be discussed separately. MW highlighted a recent meeting, alongside SS, with East Lothian Chief Executive and Head of Communities, who had reported that the proposal had been well received at their recent Scrutiny Committee and indicated they would welcome and support the proposal.
- 5.7.85 The Board queried whether the proposed location of the additional DSDS resource, intended to strengthen resilience across East Lothian, had been confirmed or would require further work during implementation. DF advised that further work would be required to determine the most appropriate location for the additional DSDS resource to ensure the maximum benefit for East Lothian communities.

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- 5.7.86 The Board noted that the additional DSDS resource had not been separately costed within the proposals. It was explained that the released resources would be reinvested and relocation of resources. SS confirmed that the additional DSDS resource would be funded through reallocated resource and would not represent a change to the overall budget.
- 5.7.87 The Board queried and were advised that a new site for Tranent had not yet been identified.
- 5.7.88 SS confirmed that the nucleus crew model had been considered but would not be taken forward following staff feedback. SS noted that East Lothian wholetime resources would move to the Tranent area although no site had yet been identified. Tranent remained a priority for rebuild due to operational activity, risk, demand and population growth. The project remained within the capital plan with site purchase expected in 2028/29 and construction over the following two years.
- 5.7.89 The Board questioned whether the main driver for the additional DSDS resource was the anticipated level of activity in East Lothian. DF confirmed that the growing demand had been a key factor alongside the fact that East Lothian was predominantly served by On-Call provision with only one wholetime station in the area.
- 5.7.90 DF explained that additional resource in East Lothian would strengthen wider regional resilience. It was noted that Edinburgh appliances were often required to support incidents in East Lothian and by increasing capacity this would also help protect resilience within Edinburgh. DF noted that this reflected feedback from Edinburgh colleagues who had highlighted the impact of Edinburgh appliances being drawn into East Lothian.
- 5.7.91 SS reiterated the need to gain a fuller understanding of the Edinburgh component, noting that strengthening the provision in East Lothian would help to mitigate the risk of Edinburgh resources being drawn out of the city.
- 5.7.92 SS noted that whilst a direct correlation with demand had not yet been identified, Edinburgh, East Lothian and Midlothian were among the areas experiencing the greatest population growth which was projected to continue over the next decade. Therefore, this level of growth could reasonably be expected to affect future risk and demand.
- 5.7.93 The Board noted that the additional resource would be based in East Lothian but it would provide wider resilience benefits alongside the new Dalkeith Fire Station.
- 5.7.94 In relation to Edinburgh, the Board acknowledged and accepted the Chief Officer's explanation and rationale not to proceed with this option to allow additional work to be undertaken. SS confirmed that the Edinburgh component would be considered through a future SDR process. SS advised that until the work had been commissioned and scope identified, the timescale could not be confirmed. SS further advised that any different option proposed would be subject to consultation, albeit localised and proportionate to the option being considered.
- 5.7.95 **The Board approved the closure of Musselburgh station which had one appliance that was crewed by wholetime firefighters, to move the Musselburgh appliance to a new-build two appliance station at Tranent, with one crewed by wholetime firefighters and one crewed by On-Call firefighters AND additionally, introduce additional wholetime dayshift resource (location to be confirmed) to support On-Call capacity in East Lothian and resilience more widely.**
- 5.7.96 **The Board approved the proposal NOT to proceed with the Edinburgh component (Marionville and Newcraighall).**

5.7.97 Inverclyde

DF advised that the recommended option covering Inverclyde (Greenock only) was to replace the second wholetime appliance, which was currently a CARP with a dedicated HRA. DF reminded the Board that since September 2023, the second appliance (CARP) had been temporarily withdrawn and provided an interim dedicated high-reach capability. The recommended option would make this temporary arrangement permanent.

5.7.98 The second option considered involved Greenock and Port Glasgow with the permanent replacement of the second appliance and in addition the introduction of a new duty system for the On-Call third appliance at Greenock. The proposals would have seen the third appliance crewed by wholetime firefighters during day shift hours (0800-1800 hrs Monday to Friday), and On-Call firefighters outwith those hours. Introduction of a new duty system for the wholetime first appliance at Port Glasgow, to crew the appliance with wholetime firefighters during day shift hours (0800-1800 hrs Monday to Friday), and On-Call firefighters outwith those hours. The On-Call second appliance would remain unchanged. Overall Inverclyde had a high density of appliances when compared to other areas with similar risk and demand across Scotland. Greenock had low levels of mobilisations and demand compared to other two pump full-time stations and also had an On-Call crew available at the station.

5.7.99 Option one provided the same operational resource since the temporary withdrawals in 2023 and no significant impact or poorer outcomes have been recorded.

5.7.100 Consultation feedback focussed on high-reach capability, maintaining a stable operational presence, and wider issues such as co-location and specialist functions.

5.7.101 Staff struggled to see any benefits and concerns were raised over increasing response times, particularly at nights and weekends under option two, and proportionality of change. Option one formalises the current temporary arrangement and maintains high reach provision whilst avoiding additional staff movement and complexity associated with option two.

5.7.102 The evidence indicates that option two would offer limited benefit and return for greater disruption. Consultation responses included suggestions relating to creating an Inverclyde superstation. A reconfiguration of stations in Inverclyde across Port Glasgow, Greenock and Gourock including the merging of stations in a purpose-built new location, had previously been a feature of the SDR. However, this was not progressed due to limitations of affordability and deliverability. It was felt that this option could be revisited in the future.

5.7.103 The Board sought further explanation of the rationale for not proceeding with the proposed duty-system changes at this stage and queried whether any future review of station locations could consider strengthening Gourock, given that it is the busiest station in the area. SS reiterated his earlier comments relating to the SLT's amendment of the proposals in terms of organisational capacity, resource, change capacity and the balance of deliverability against benefit. SS advised that the benefit of the current option, when considered against deliverability, was not as strong as the potential longer-term station reconfiguration option and noted that this alternative had emerged through the process and needed to be considered further. SS further advised that the current capital funding would not allow that option to proceed at present and on that basis, option one remained the appropriate recommendation at this stage.

5.7.104 The Board sought clarification that should the recommendation option be approved, this would not prevent the Service from considering alternative options in the future. The Board noted that the benefits of progressing option two were not considered sufficient to justify implementation. DF reiterated that option one reflected the current arrangements

introduced through the temporary appliance withdrawals in 2023 and confirmed that it would not prevent further investigation into alternative options in future. DF reminded the Board that a similar option had been considered at the earlier stage of the process but had been discounted at the hurdle-criteria stage due to affordability.

- 5.7.105 The Board questioned whether option two had become more complex during development than the other options considered and what the underlying rationale or ambition had been. DF advised that the early rationale had been developed through consideration of the distribution of activity, local risk and demand across the area. DF further advised that option two had been intended to explore whether day-shift duty systems could have supplemented the area's strong On-Call position. However, resilience during nights and weekends had to be considered, particularly in relation to Port Glasgow. DF noted that, whilst the option was not overly complicated, there were more elements to be considered than some of the other options.
- 5.7.106 **The Board approved the recommendation to replace the second wholetime appliance at Greenock, which was a combined aerial rescue pump (CARP) with a dedicated high reach appliance (HRA). The second appliance (CARP) had been temporarily withdrawn and replaced with a high reach appliance (HRA) in September 2023.**
- 5.7.107 **Glasgow**
DF advised that the recommended option covering Glasgow was to rebuild Cowcaddens on the adjacent Maitland Street site, reinstate the second wholetime pumping appliance temporarily withdrawn in September 2023, and reduce the number of wholetime pumping appliances at Springburn from two to one. The option would also close the one wholetime pumping appliance at Yorkhill, reinstate the second wholetime appliance at Maryhill, and permanently reduce the number of wholetime appliances at Govan from two to one. The second appliance at Govan had been temporarily withdrawn in September 2023.
- 5.7.108 The second option proposed the closure of Cowcaddens, which currently has two wholetime appliances, while retaining ownership of the neighbouring Maitland Street site for future development. The option also maintained the current reduction of wholetime appliances at Govan from two to one and reinstated the second wholetime appliance at Maryhill, which had been temporarily withdrawn in September 2023. Operational evidence showed only marginal differences between the two options; however, option one provided better balance of workload across Springburn, Cowcaddens and Maryhill. Option one would avoid concentrating demand at Springburn and recognised the limitations of the Yorkhill site including restrictions on pump coverage caused by the Clyde Expressway and the River Clyde. Option one had been supported by Glasgow City Council which noted that it best aligned with regeneration and longer-term planning for the city.
- 5.7.109 Public consultation feedback highlighted concerns about reduced fire cover. However, it was noted that resources would remain consistent with arrangements in place since 2023, albeit with a different disposition. The review of the 2023 temporary appliance withdrawals had been a useful evaluation of those changes and provided reassurance. Specific risks, including high-rise development and student accommodation were noted and respondents placed significant value on Cowcaddens' central location and high activity levels. Alternative suggestions including station mergers, crewing models and co-location were also noted. Further review of Glasgow and the surrounding areas would continue to be developed through future phases of the SDR.
- 5.7.110 The Board queried whether Glasgow's growing population including student accommodation and increasing number of high-rise developments had been considered within the proposals. DF advised that the city's risk profile had been considered in 2023, and that subsequent evaluations had confirmed that the reduction in wholetime

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appliances remained appropriate. The proposed option would rebalance existing resources.

- 5.7.111 The Board sought clarity on the timescales for the rebuilding of Cowcaddens and whether this would impact on the other proposed changes, ie closure of Yorkhill. SO'D advised that the intention was to commence the new build whilst the existing Cowcaddens station remained operational. It was noted that planning permission had been agreed in principle, however the design phase etc still needed to be progressed before the timescale could be confirmed. It was noted that there were no additional hurdles anticipated to impede deliverability. It was further noted that the proposed new build remained affordable and deliverable within the current five-year capital programme.
- 5.7.112 It was confirmed that there would be no delay in reinstating the second pump at Cowcaddens due to the new build.
- 5.7.113 The Board sought clarification on the temporary arrangements for appliance location and capacity during the new build process. DF advised that the phasing approach would retain the same overall number of appliances whilst temporarily redistributing resources in order to maintain a balance of workload. DF noted that the level of demand (capacity) was considered manageable.
- 5.7.114 The Board sought clarification on the capital cost difference between the two options and what additional benefit would be delivered through option one. SO'D advised that the capital cost difference between the two options was approximately £8 million. SO'D further advised that Option one would remove two ageing stations and would provide a new, fit for purpose facility in Glasgow city centre. The new facility would provide accommodation equivalent to two stations whilst supporting a revised distribution of appliances to better align resources with risk and demand. SO'D noted that the closure of Yorkhill was expected to generate staff and running cost savings of approximately £1.35 million per year.
- 5.7.115 The Board sought clarity on the timescale for the sale of the Cowcaddens site. SO'D advised that the Board would be updated at their next meeting (9 July) to confirm the sale would not progress during 2026/27.
- 5.7.116 The Board sought assurance on the SECC's concerns regarding its enhanced tier status under the Terrorism Protection of Premises Act 2025 and the potential impact of the proposals on the Service's multi-agency response. DF confirmed that Glasgow's response would remain resilient and confirmed the proposals would not affect the Service's ability to meet the site's requirements. DF explained that although Yorkhill was closer to the SECC, there were road network challenges in the surrounding area.
- 5.7.117 SS confirmed that the SLT supported the recommendation to proceed with option one.
- 5.7.1.18 **The Board approved the recommendation to rebuild Cowcaddens on the adjacent Maitland Street site, reinstate the second wholetime pumping appliance that was temporarily withdrawn in September 2023, AND reduce the number of wholetime pumping appliances based at Springburn from two to one, AND close Yorkhill which has one wholetime pumping appliance based there, AND reinstate the second wholetime appliance at Maryhill that was temporarily withdrawn in September 2023, AND reduce the number of wholetime appliances based at Govan from two to one. The second appliance was temporarily withdrawn in September 2023.**
- 5.7.119 **Lanarkshire (Cumbernauld and Hamilton)**
DF advised that the recommended option covering Lanarkshire was to introduce alternative duty system for the second appliance at Cumbernauld, which was currently

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crewed by wholetime firefighters. The proposals were to crew the appliance with wholetime firefighters during day shift hours (0800-1800 hrs Monday to Friday) and with On-Call firefighters outwith those hours. The first appliance would remain unchanged. In addition, the number of wholetime appliances based at Hamilton would reduce from two to one, making the temporary withdrawal since September 2023 of the second appliance permanent.

- 5.7.120 The second option involved Bellshill, Cumbernauld, Hamilton and Lesmahagow. The proposal for Cumbernauld remained the same as the first options. The proposal for Hamilton would introduce an alternative DSDS for the second appliance with the first appliance remaining unchanged. Bellshill would increase the station to two appliances, one wholetime and one day shift duty system. In addition, a nucleus crew of wholetime firefighters would be introduced at Lesmahagow to be tactically deployed across the area during weekday day-shift hours, supporting the existing On-Call appliances.
- 5.7.121 DF advised that Cumbernauld was one of the Service's RAAC stations and a decision was required on its occupancy level to ensure appropriate remediation and reconfiguration works be completed. Cumbernauld was well located but had relatively low demand compared with other two-pump wholetime stations across Scotland. Hamilton station was close to the arterial road network but did not provide the most efficient coverage of risk and demand in the area due to the location of Bellshill and Motherwell. As such, this had been the reason Hamilton's second appliance was temporarily withdrawn in 2023. Evaluation of the temporary appliance withdrawals had not identified any significant impact on incident outcomes in the area following the removal of Hamilton's second appliance.
- 5.7.122 Staff and public consultation feedback opposed the proposed changes with concerns mainly focused on increased response times for second appliances and wider resilience across Lanarkshire. The ability to recruit and retain On-Call staff from the outset had been identified as a potential barrier. Transitional costs would be required to maintain appropriate skills and competencies through wholetime staff until the On-Call crew were fully operational. Participants at public meetings also criticised the proposal to add resources to support On-Call provision through a hub at Lesmahagow, as they did not consider this would benefit Lanarkshire more broadly. Option two had been fully considered and it had been recognised that additional resources for Lanarkshire could be introduced in future should changes in risk or demand require them.
- 5.7.123 The Board sought clarification why option one had been recommended when option two appeared less harmful. DF advised that, whilst option two reflected Lanarkshire's changing profile and communities, the key element of the configuration would be the ability to release resources from Cumbernauld for reinvestment elsewhere. DF reiterated that Cumbernauld remained one of the lowest-demand stations of its type and could operate with one wholetime appliance supported by a day-shift On-Call arrangement.
- 5.7.124 In relation to option one, the Board sought clarification on the reference to the avoidance of £5 million of capital investment and whether the remediation works were included within the capital plan. SO'D advised that the change to day shift duty system at Cumbernauld would change the station's capacity and layout requirements, negating the need for a larger build. The works would focus on remediation and refurbishment of the existing site.
- 5.7.125 The Board sought assurance that the proposal would not compromise the urban search and rescue capability currently based at Cumbernauld. DF noted that this issue had arisen throughout the process. DF highlighted the distinction between the specialist resources review and the SDR, whilst recognising the clear links between them where considering stations that have a specialist resource. DF explained that the Operations function and the Local Senior Officer for Lanarkshire would be expected to consider how

the operational resource could be maintained and supported with the revised crewing model.

- 5.7.126 SS noted that the questions raised reflected the areas considered by SLT. SS confirmed that the SLT supported the recommendation to proceed with option one.
- 5.7.127 **The Board approved the introduction of an alternative duty system for the second appliance at Cumbernauld, which was currently crewed by wholetime firefighters. This would see that appliance crewed by wholetime firefighters on a Day Shift Duty System and crewed by On-Call firefighters out with these times. The first wholetime appliance would be unchanged. The Board approved the reduction of wholetime appliances based at Hamilton from two to one, the second appliance having been temporarily withdrawn in September 2023.**
- 5.7.128 **Dundee City and Monifieth**
DF advised that the recommended option (option two) covering Dundee City and Monifieth was to remove the wholetime appliance from Balmossie, retaining one On-Call appliance there, and reinstate the second wholetime appliance at Kingsway East, which had been temporarily removed in September 2023.
- 5.7.129 Option one proposed closing Balmossie, which currently had one wholetime appliance and one On-Call appliance, and reinstate the second wholetime appliance at Kingsway East, which was temporarily removed in September 2023.
- 5.7.130 Balmossie had not been within scope at the time of the temporary withdrawal, as it had only one wholetime appliance. However, data now indicates that Balmossie was the more suitable option for permanent withdrawal or closure. Reinstating the second wholetime appliance at Kingsway East would provide adequate coverage for the area. Balmossie was poorly located on the road network which limited the operational areas that it could serve. Operational demand at Balmossie was the fourth lowest of stations of the same type and was lower than the busiest On-Call stations.
- 5.7.131 Public consultation overwhelmingly opposed the closure or downgrading of the station with concerns mainly focussed on response times. The strongest feedback came from Balmossie On-Call staff, mainly focussed on income impacts and specialist roles. Co-location and merger options were raised during the consultation process, however these options were not feasible within current strategic priorities, capital constraints and delivery timescales. The suggestion to develop a shared hub or new purpose-built site was acknowledged as a strong operational option, however, it could not be progressed during this phase of SDR due to affordability and deliverability considerations.
- 5.7.132 Operational rationale supported option two, as it would preserve Dundee's operational balance, retain specialist capability at Balmossie and avoid the greater workforce and resilience impact associated with option one. It had also been recognised that Balmossie was a key mobilisation location for the Scottish Ambulance Service.
- 5.7.133 SS reiterated the value of the feedback and thanked those who contributed, noting that the feedback had been influential in shaping the position. SS recognised significant value of On-Call firefighters across all stations, including Balmossie, through their commitment to their communities. SS noted that the local area would lose an additional pump, however, it was considered that this remained the overall right course of action. SS referenced the public service reform and noted the partnership with Scottish Ambulance Service should be considered in relation to the Balmossie site. SS advised that the proposal struck an appropriate balance between maintaining operational resilience, allowing for future considerations as outlined by DF, and ensuring that fire cover and preventative activity continued to be provided in the Balmossie area through the On-Call crew.

- 5.7.134 The Board sought clarification that the data modelling compared the proposed position with the pre-2023 baseline, when Kingsway East had two pumps. DF confirmed that the operational response modelling and outputs are based on the pre-2023 position.
- 5.7.135 The Board sought clarification that proceeding with option two would retain the potential for further development or alternative options in future, particularly in relation to public service reform. SS confirmed that this was the case.
- 5.7.136 The Board noted the reference to the “proven value” of the Balmossie wholetime duty system hub and queried whether further evidence supported that statement. DF confirmed that factual evidence was available on the mobilisation and use of the Balmossie wholetime appliance but would not speculate on the intended meaning of the wording.
- 5.7.137 The Board raised concerns whether communications on wider efficiency savings were reaching staff effectively and welcomed the verbatim recording of staff feedback. DF explained that the wider improvement programme continued to be communicated through regular newsletters covering SDR and related projects.
- 5.7.138 The Board commented on the need to ensure future-focused ideas raised during consultation, such as co-location, hubs, etc be captured for future consideration.
- 5.7.139 SS confirmed that the SLT supported the recommendation to proceed with option two and noted that liberated personnel would be used to support prevention and training activities.
- 5.7.140 **The Board approved the recommendation to remove the wholetime appliance from Balmossie station and maintain one On-Call appliance at the station; and reinstate the second wholetime appliance at Kingsway East station that was temporarily removed in September 2023**
- 5.7.141 **Fife**
DF advised that option one covering Fife involved Dunfermline, Lochgelly and Methil. Option one would replace the third appliance at Dunfermline, currently a CARP with a dedicated HRA. The third appliance had been temporarily withdrawn and replaced with a HRA in September 2023 and would make this change permanent. The option would also reduce the number of wholetime appliances at Lochgelly and Methil from two to one and reinstate the second appliance at Glenrothes. Option two was the same as option one, with the exception that the second appliance would be reinstated at Methil instead of Glenrothes. These were the two options taken forward for consultation.
- 5.7.142 Operational demand at Lochgelly, Glenrothes and Methil were amongst the lowest of all wholetime stations with two appliances and was more closely aligned with stations operating a single appliance. Operational modelling indicated that permanently reducing two of these locations to one appliance would still provide sufficient coverage. Since the temporary withdrawals in September 2023, incident demand at Lochgelly had slightly exceeded that of Glenrothes and Methil. As Glenrothes and Methil had fewer appliances available, Lochgelly’s two appliances alongside the second appliance from Kirkcaldy had taken a greater share of operational activity. There had been overwhelming opposition from staff and consultation respondents to both proposed options.
- 5.7.143 During consultation, staff and communities suggested that the current temporary arrangements should be considered as a permanent option. Lochgelly staff in particular sought a stronger case for reinvestment and felt that retaining the current model would avoid further disruption.

- 5.7.144 Due to the number of communities associated with the Fife options, a substantial volume of information had been considered. Strong views were expressed that Fife was being disproportionately affected by the proposed changes. The main themes focussed on response times, public and firefighter safety, wider area resilience, and the future of specialist resources based in Fife. In relation to specialist resources, there was uncertainty about the future of the rope rescue unit currently situated at Lochgelly with staff concerned about the potential costs of relocating the unit to another station. There was also significant scepticism about the rationale and data used. In Dunfermline, the proposals were received more positively with the replacement of the CARP with a dedicated HRA viewed as a significant operational improvement. However, crews expressed concern that the loss of Lochgelly's second appliance could affect second and third pump response times in West Fife. There were also calls for the Service to consider more flexible staffing models including day crewing, rotating second appliances, station consolidation or merger and regional hubs. Similar station merger proposals had been ruled out of this phase of the SDR on affordability and deliverability grounds.
- 5.7.145 SS welcomed the feedback and passion expressed by communities, staff and stakeholders across Fife, noting that the feedback had influenced the Service's thinking and the proposed outcome. SS advised that SLT proposed deferring the decision on the remaining Fife options, as an alternative proposal had been put forward during consultation to make the current temporary wholtime pump withdrawal permanent. SLT had considered this proposal alongside the ten-pump withdrawal analysis and the technical assessment provided as part of the consultation. Consideration had also been given to deliverability, financial implications, training capacity, the cost of removing rope rescue capability from the station, and the associated workforce impact. SS advised that SLT believed that the benefits of the Fife changes had largely been achieved and that any further benefit would not be proportionate to the level of disruption required at this stage.
- 5.7.146 SS confirmed that the SLT were committed to considering the alternative option of permanently implementing the current temporary withdrawal, whilst exploring whether the DSDS resource in Fife could support resilience and the On-Call model. On that basis, it was proposed to proceed with the Dunfermline element and defer the remaining elements to allow further work and public consultation.
- 5.7.147 The Board sought clarification on the work required and timeline needed to reach a decision on the Fife options, noting that the current temporary configuration had already been in place since September 2023. DF explained that although evidence exists from the temporary arrangement, the alternative option would need to be modelled and presented in the same way as options one and two to assess the long-term impact. DF advised that further public consultation would be required as the previous consultation had presented options where a resource could return to either Glenrothes or Methil, whereas the alternative option would not restore a resource to either community. Legal advice confirmed that the proposal should therefore return to public consultation before being reconsidered in the wider Fife context.
- 5.7.148 The Board questioned whether any longer-term review of the Fife area should consider the wider balance of resources across Central and East Fife. SS reminded the Board that alongside station activity levels, overall resilience, weight of response and specialist resources had to be considered. SS noted that rescue team capability required two appliances to provide appropriate support.
- 5.7.149 The Board noted that the current temporary Fife configuration had resulted in no evidence of adverse impact. SS confirmed that the current model had operated for three years and had been subject to evaluation and ongoing operational assurance. SS noted that first appliance attendance remained the key factor and that any potential sub-optimal second appliance cover had to be balanced against specialist resources, deliverability,

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organisational impact and training capacity. CMcG advised that the position had to be considered in the wider context of training priorities and other activity beyond the SDR, as any decision could have direct or indirect impacts across the organisation.

- 5.7.150 **The Board approved the recommendation to permanently replace the third appliance at Dunfermline which was a combined aerial rescue pump (CARP), with a dedicated high reach appliance (HRA), and defer decision on the remainder of the options pending further consideration of an alternative proposal to permanently implement the current temporary wholetime pump withdrawal configuration.**

- 5.8 **The Board, having approved the individual options, confirmed their approval of the entire list of recommendations as itemised with the overarching recommendations report (paragraph 4.3).**

5.9 Next Steps

- 5.9.1 SS advised that the next steps included the communication of today's outcomes with staff and stakeholders, engaging with trade union colleagues and developing individual delivery plans for each option which would then be progressed through the change governance routes.

- 5.9.2 SS confirmed that, on the basis of the outcomes of today's meeting, there were no further staff headcount reductions beyond September 2023, instead there was an increase of one wholetime DSDS appliance and the potential recruitment of up to 20 additional On-Call staff in DSDS areas.

- 5.9.3 It was agreed that an action would be taken to the Integrated Governance Forum to consider the overarching benefits tracking and governance arrangements.

ACTION: BST

- 5.9.4 It was noted that the Board would be given the opportunity to provide feedback or debrief on any aspects which arose through the consultation, such as opportunities to explore, emergency response hubs, so that they are not lost. It was further noted that a separate debrief on the SDR process would be scheduled at an appropriate time.

5.10 Closing Remarks

- 5.10.1 SS noted his thanks to the Board for their discussion and challenge throughout the meeting and entire process. SS further noted his thanks to all staff and communities for their engagement and contributions throughout the consultation process.

- 5.10.2 On behalf of the Board, the Chair extended her thanks to all staff, stakeholders, Service Delivery Team, Board Support Team and Legal Service Manager for their advice, support and efforts throughout the process. Thanks were also extended to everyone who contributed to the consultation, and it was hoped that they could be assured that their input had been taken into consideration and helped shaped the changes, where appropriate.

- 5.10.3 The Chair acknowledged the impact of today's outcomes on staff and that the Board would continue to seek assurance on mitigating challenges and maximising opportunities.

- 5.10.4 On behalf of the Board, the Chair offered her thanks to Deborah Stanfield for her contributions during her tenure with the Service and best wishes for the future.

6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 6.1 It was confirmed that the provisional public meeting of the Board scheduled to take place on Thursday 25 June 2026 would now be stood down.

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- 6.2 A special public meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on Thursday 9 July 2026, to cover business as usual matters deferred from the June meeting.
- 6.3 There being no further matters to discuss in public, the meeting closed at 1606 hrs.