PUBLIC MEETING - SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

THURSDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2026 @ 1000 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)
Therese O'Donnell (TO'D)
Malcolm Payton (MP)
Madeline Smith (MS)
Tim Wright (TW)
Angiolina Foster, Deputy Chair (AF)
Brian Baverstock (BB)
Neil Mapes (NM)
Andrew Smith (AS)
Paul Stollard (PS)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Stuart Stevens (SS)	Chief Officer
Sarah O'Donnell (SO'D)	Deputy Chief Officer (Corporate Services)
Jon Henderson (JH)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Prevention
Craig McGoldrick (CMcG)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Training, Safety and Assurance
Penny McIntyre (PMcI)	Director of People, Communications and Engagement
James Wallace (JW)	Director of Finance, Digital and Infrastructure
Ramona Coxall (RC)	People Manager (Item 5 only)
Lorna Forrest (LF)	Programme Manager (Item 5 only)
Louise Patrick (LP)	Strategic Planning and Partnerships Co-ordinator (Item 7 only)
David Johnston (DJ)	Risk and Audit Manager (Item 8 only)
Christopher Casey (CC)	Group Commander, Board Support Manager
Heather Greig (HG)	Executive Officer Board Support
Debbie Haddow (DJH)	Board Support/Minutes

OBSERVERS:

John Joyce, HMFSI

1 CHAIR'S WELCOME

1.1 The Chair opened the meeting welcoming those attending and observing via MS Teams. Attendees were reminded to raise their hands, in accordance with the remote meeting protocol, should they wish to ask a question.

2 APOLOGIES

2.1 Andrew Watt, Deputy Chief Officer
David Farries, Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Operational Delivery
Mark McAteer, Director of Governance, Strategy and Change

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

3.1 The Board agreed that the *Draft Annual Performance Review 2025/26* and *Settlement Authority for Employers Liability Claim* would be taken in private due to confidential

matters (standing Orders 9G) and matters subject to legal proceedings (Standing Order 9D), respectively.

3.2 No further items were identified.

4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

- Paul Stollard, Chair of Board of Institute of Fire Engineers
- Tim Wright, Trustee of Dementia Heroes Charity

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

5 SERVICE DELIVERY REVIEW: RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT - ADDENDUM

5.1 RC presented a report providing a summary of the outcomes arising from the Individual Redundancy Consultation meetings undertaken with affected volunteer employees at Corriecravie, Colintraive and Kerrera. The Board were asked to approve the closure of the three long-term dormant stations which have volunteer employees remaining.

5.2 RC advised that the report refers to voluntary severance, however, subject to the Board's decision, these cases were essentially compulsory redundancies. Discussions had taken place with the Sponsor Unit who recognised that the nature of on-call and volunteer roles made it difficult to find suitable alternative employment. RC further advised that to obtain approval under the Scottish Public Finance Manual, individual voluntary severance business cases had to be submitted to demonstrate value for money and propriety.

5.3 RC advised that following the Board's decision on 22 June 2026 to commence redundancy consultation processes, formal individual redundancy consultation meetings had been undertaken with the affected individuals. The following key points were highlighted:

- Prior to the consultation meeting, affected individuals were offered representation but all chose to proceed unaccompanied.
- Corriecravie: The two remaining volunteer firefighters agreed to transfer permanently to Blackwaterfoot Community Fire Station, subject to Board approval and contractual formalisation. The usual trial period was deemed unnecessary as both were already working in this location.
- Colintraive: No suitable alternative to redundancy had been identified due to logistical challenges, the employee's primary employment and the inability to recruit sufficient volunteer staff to retain the unit. All reasonable measures to avoid redundancy had been explored and considered. The recommendation was to proceed with the closure of Colintraive and confirm termination of employment by reason of redundancy.
- Kerrera: No suitable alternative to redundancy had been identified due to logistical challenges, the employees' primary employment and the inability to recruit sufficient volunteer staff to retain the unit. The recommendation was to proceed with the closure of Kerrera and confirm termination of employment by reason of redundancy. There were currently 2 candidates within the recruitment pipeline, but they had not progressed to formal assessment over the previous 2 year time period. They would be advised that should the volunteer provision be re-established, an island-wide recruitment process would be undertaken.
- During discussions at Kerrera, concerns relating to future emergency response arrangements were raised and the provision/arrangements within the Kerrera Island Response Plan were highlighted.
- Following conclusion of the formal consultation process, the recommendations had been approved by the Service Delivery Review (SDR) Programme Board and Strategic Leadership Team (SLT).
- In line with the Scottish Public Finance Manual, individual draft Voluntary Severance Business Cases had been submitted to the Sponsor Unit seeking agreement in principle to proceed. The Accountable Officer had provided approval, subject to

Board decision, for final business cases to be submitted for the statutory entitlement to redundancy where no suitable alternative can be identified.

5.4 PMcI confirmed that the process undertaken had been robust and remained people focused throughout. Thanks were extended to RC for her commitment and work during the process.

5.5 The Board sought clarification that the process undertaken had met the legal requirements for a fair compulsory redundancy process. PMcI confirmed that the correct procedures had been followed and were in line with legislation and the Service's obligations.

5.6 In regard to the concerns raised during the Kerrera consultation process relating to future emergency island provision, the Board questioned the appropriateness of this forming part of the consultation record. The Board stated that their original decision to close Kerrera had fully considered and agreed that the response plans were adequate. It was noted that the inclusion of these concerns, albeit they remained important, blurred the distinction between the island residents and SFRS employees undergoing the consultation process. As such, they should not form part of the rationale for the recommendations presented for decision within the report. The Board commented on the sequencing of the original decision and consultation process and asked for consideration to be given to the recording of similar discussions in any future processes.

5.7 The Board sought clarity on what HR/legal confirmation was required in relation to the 2 Kerrera candidates. RC advised that legal services had reviewed and approved every stage and that a final check would be undertaken following today's meeting.

5.8 In regard to the final business cases, the Board queried whether any further approval would be required. RC confirmed that the Board's decision today would be the final approval on whether to close the long-term dormant stations.

5.9 The Board suggested that the recommendation (4.1iv) be amended to read "following conclusion of the redundancy process", as the consultation had formed only one part of the wider process. It was agreed to note this change.

ACTION: RC

5.10 The Board noted that the financial implications had not been presented within the report and requested an approximate overall cost be provided to support the decision-making process. RC advised that estimated costs were available and it was agreed that these would be circulated outwith the meeting. The Board requested that any future reports should include indicative costs to help improve transparency and accountability.

ACTION: RC

5.11 During discussions, several areas were highlighted for future consideration and assurances. These included timescales for prospective recruits to progress through the recruitment process, potential contradictory term of volunteer employees, and the regular review of island response plans/community safety measures. It was confirmed that although these areas were important, they would not directly impact on the Board's decision.

5.12 The Board acknowledged the significant impact on the individuals affected and thanked them for their positive engagement throughout the process.

5.13 **The Board approved the closure of the long-term dormant stations at Corriecravie, Colintraive and Kerrera, following conclusion of redundancy consultation and on the basis of the case for change; with substantial assurance.**

(R Coxall left the meeting at 1033 hrs)

6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

6.1 The next public meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on Thursday 29 October 2026.

6.2 There being no further matters to discuss in public, the meeting closed at 1033 hrs.

(The meeting broke at 1033 hrs and reconvened in private session at 1040 hrs)

PRIVATE SESSION

7 DRAFT ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW 2025/26

7.1 SO'D introduced LP who presented the draft Annual Performance Review Report 2025/26 and sought approval of its release to Scottish Government ahead of the annual review meeting on 11 November 2026.

7.2 **Subject to the amendments noted, the Board approved the draft Annual Performance Review Report 2025/26 and its release to Scottish Government, with reasonable assurance.**

8 SETTLEMENT AUTHORITY FOR AN EMPLOYER'S LIABILITY CLAIM

8.1 DJ presented the report seeking approval for the settlement of an employer's liability claim intimated against the Service.

8.2 **The Board approved the recommendation within the report with reasonable assurance.**

On behalf of the Board, the Chair extended her thanks and appreciation to Board Members Brian Baverstock, Tim Wright and Paul Stollard for their hard work, focus and contributions throughout their tenures, ahead of their exit from the Board at the end of their contracted terms.

There being no further matters to discuss in private, the meeting closed at 1130 hrs.