



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

PUBLIC MEETING – STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 4 MARCH 2021 @ 1300 HOURS

BY CONFERENCE FACILITIES

PRESENT:

Primrose Stark (Chair) (PS)
Bill McQueen (BMcQ)

Anne Buchanan (Deputy Chair) (AB)
Malcolm Payton (MP)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Liz Barnes (LB)	Director of People and Organisational Development
John Dickie (JD)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Training, Safety and Assurance
Stuart Stevens (SSt)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Service Delivery
Scott Semple (SSe)	Head of People and Organisational Development
Geri Thomson (GT)	Deputy Head of People and Organisational Development
Jason Sharp (JS)	Area Commander Workforce, Planning and Resourcing
Paul King (PK)	Deputy Assistant Chief Officer Training and Employee Development
Jim Holden (JH)	Senior Health and Safety Advisor
Kirsty Darwent (KD)	Chair of SFRS Board
Alasdair Cameron (AC)	Group Commander, Board Support
Heather Greig (HG)	Executive Officer Board Support
Debbie Haddow (DH)	Board Support /Minutes

OBSERVERS:

Sandra Haig HROD Manager

1 WELCOME

1.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed those present.

2 APOLOGIES

2.1 Fiona Munro, Head of People and Organisational Development
Karen Lockhart, Head of Safety and Assurance
Rachel Scott, Deputy Head of People and Organisational Development
Richard Whetton, Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance

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

3.1 The Committee discussed and agreed that the Key Case Update report would be heard in private session due to the small number of individuals involved and confidentiality in line with Standing Orders (Item 9F). The draft minutes/verbal update of the Remuneration, Appointments and Nominations Sub Committee would also be taken in private due to the confidential nature of business taken to this meeting.

3.2 No further items were identified.

4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

4.1 None.

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 10 DECEMBER 2020

5.1 The following amendments were noted and agreed:

Item 7.1.5 – Performance and Risk Report Quarter 2 2021/21 – GT requested that the text “*In relation to the recommencement of health and safety activities, ...*” to be amended with “*In relation to the recommencement of health and wellbeing activities, ...*”

Item 13.2.1 – Update from Partnership Advisory Forum – MP requested that the text “*Concern that prior knowledge of Scottish Ambulance Service’s non-attendance was known.*” to be amended to “*Concern that prior knowledge of Scottish Ambulance Service’s non-attendance is known*”.

5.2 **Subject to the above amendments, the minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2020 were approved as a true record of the meeting.**

5.3 Matters Arising

5.3.1 None

6 ACTION LOG

6.1 The Committee considered the action log and noted the updates.

6.2 Due to the postponement of the Building the Future Together workshop, items 8.1.3 and 8.2.2 to be reopened until a new date has been scheduled.

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

7. PERFORMANCE AND RISK REPORT QUARTER 3 2020/21

7.1 People and Organisational Development (POD)

7.1.1 SSe presented the Committee with the POD Progress and Performance Report Quarter 3 2020/21, highlighting the following key areas:

- Following the publication of this report, an agreement has been reached in relation to the standardisation of Instructor’s Terms and Conditions.
- Successful COVID Recognition Scheme launched and would close in March 2021.
- Leadership Development Centre Policy now live. This would help support and prepare individuals for future promotion and leadership roles.
- Continual development of skill bank with a view to launch in Q4.
- Update on People, Training, Finance and Asset (PTFA) Programme including ongoing discussions with current systems provider to extend existing contracts to ensure continuity through the tendering phase. Paul McGovern has been appointed as Programme Manager.
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) project extended by 6 months (September 2021).
- Resourcing of RVDS continues to be challenging. Recently established National RVDS Leadership Forum would help to progress this area and implement involvements.
- Progressing the review of Re-engagement Policy.
- Through collaborative work within the Service, pre-placement recruitment and routine health assessments have been re-established in Q3 in line with a revised safe system of work and appropriate risk assessments.
- Wellbeing Group continues to produce a suite of resources which are available via iHub.
- Employee Wellbeing survey undertaken and results will be available in Q4.

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- Analysis on referrals both management and self-referrals, improved attendance at (remote) appointments, recognition of both work and non-work related stress and support mechanisms available.
- Recording of COVID absences to be categorised separately to improve analysis.
- Reviewing Directorate's Annual Operating Plan for 2021 and Performance Management Framework.

7.1.2 The Committee noted the positive connotation from increased self-referrals and the fact that staff were aware of the support available.

7.1.3 SSe noted that consideration would need to be given to separate and identify the impact of COVID on statistical data.

7.1.4 GT noted that self-referrals were being requested for a wider range of reasons, both self-referrals and management referral data were reviewed and discussed through individual case management conferences between Health & Wellbeing and HR Business Partners. Due to health and absence data being held on separate systems, the ability to track and trace the impact of previous referrals was currently a manual, time-consuming process. GT reminded the Committee of the post incident support arrangements currently in place.

7.1.5 In relation to any identified themes emerging from Wellbeing Survey, SSe confirmed that they would be linked into the next staff survey.

7.1.6 In relation to signposting staff to external organisations, who can provide support with relationships outside the workplace, SSe agreed to revisit this with the Wellbeing Group.

7.1.7 In relation to RIDDOR reporting incidents relating to COVID, JD gave assurances that the Service had robust processes in place for identifying and responding (rapid review) to any incidents. Following any rapid review, an action plan was developed for the individual location to highlight and support best practice. He further noted that regular monthly meetings were held with the HSE Inspector, who had provided positive feedback on the processes in place. JD reminded the Committee that all SFRS premises have been designated COVID secure.

7.1.8 JH informed the Committee that the increase in incidents of exposure to harmful substances was directly related to COVID.

7.1.9 In regard to the PVG project, the Committee commented on the reliance on one counter-signatory and questioned whether the Service could introduce further measures to improve response rates. GT reminded the Committee of the impact of COVID on the project and noted several areas of improvement. These included the PVG database being developed to more effectively track progress of individual PVG forms, providing regular monitoring reports to Local Senior Officers, additional administration support and increasing numbers of counter-signatories. GT briefed the Committee on the different processes in place for existing staff and potential new recruits should an issue occur. The project was estimated as 50% complete at the start of 2021.

7.1.10 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

7.2 Training, Safety and Assurance

7.2.1 PK presented Training, Safety and Assurance Progress and Performance Quarter 3 Report 2020/21. Within the Training function, the following key areas were highlighted:

- 56 new RVDS Trainee Firefighters completed their Task and Task Management course, across 7 different training locations, on 11 December 2020. 24 Wholetime Trainee Firefighters graduated on 18 December 2020 and a further 24 new Trainee Firefighters were scheduled to graduate in April 2021.

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- Within Q3, 22 Specialist courses were delivered including a multi-agency National Inter-Agency Liaison Officer (NILO) course. During this 2-week course, one case of COVID was identified however, there were no transmission to other attendees.
- Area Commander Richie Hall was appointed as the Continuous Improvement Programme Manager in November 2020.
- Within Q3 the risk movement had remained stable, however, due to continuing restrictions this will impact on Q4.
- Spotlight risk on specialist rescue attributes that have reduced due to the focus on core skills. Processes were in place to risk assess and identify any reduction in specialist skills that would impact on maintaining operational ability. Should any be identified, a concerted focus on that specific skills would be made.
- Core competencies remain static due to the focus on key skills. Trends identified decline in Incident Command competence for Flexi Duty Officers, however mitigating actions have been put in place ie remote assessments. Ability to assess incident command competencies on the incident ground was still being progressed.
- Proposal to reformat report, incorporating new performance indicators, to be discussed with the Committee Chair.

(SS left the meeting at 1400 hrs)

- 7.2.2 The Committee noted the innovative solutions introduced during the pandemic and particularly welcomed competence assessment on the incident ground as part of the Incident Command Course.
- 7.2.3 The Committee queried any potential increased risks due to the decline in specialist skills. PK informed the Committee that the matrix within the report relate to individuals who are nearing their periodic reaccreditation, however, a recovery plan had been developed to address this. He reminded the Committee that staff were continuing to maintain their skills through training, and recording, on stations. JD noted that the Service had processes in place for tactical withdrawal and deploy specialist services to ensure an appropriate response.
- 7.2.4 PK informed the Committee that there was a training backlog hence extending currency periods. The annual Training Needs Analysis (TNA) had recently been compiled and would be discussed with Service Delivery colleagues to develop a training delivery and recovery plan.
- 7.2.5 In relation to the Improvement Plan, JH noted the overall progress was 60% with significant improvements across most of the areas. This indicated that these plans were becoming embedded within Directorates. Two areas, Operations and Service Development, were impacted significantly by COVID, however, Safety and Assurance Improvement Group have been reconvened in this areas and plans were now in place to progress overdue actions.
- 7.2.6 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

8 WORKPLACE PLANNING

8.1 Resourcing: Verbal update

- 8.1.1 JS provided the Committee with a verbal update on resourcing, highlighting the following key points:
- As a result of COVID restrictions, unique challenges had arisen in relation to continuing to facilitate fitness testing, medicals, and interviews. Interviews were now held virtually.
 - Forums established to support recruitment and selection are: National Retained and Volunteer Leadership Forum including the RVDS projects; Operational Availability Group, Resourcing Recovery Group; Task & Finish Group to focus on local solutions for fitness, medicals, selection testing, training, etc.

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- 8.1.2 The Committee welcomed the localised targeted interventions and the integrated Directorate collaboration.
- 8.1.3 JS informed the Committee that a significant increase in applications had been received following both the Operational Control and Wholetime Firefighters campaigns. JS provided an overview of the applications received and the potential benefits of hosting an information forum or producing information videos prior to campaigns being launched. Within the Wholetime application process, the Service currently have a self-assessment tool to allow individuals to self-assess prior to application.
- 8.1.4 JS reiterated the impact of COVID on the Strategic Resourcing Plan. He informed the Committee of the upcoming process for Area Commander, commencing on 22 March 2021 for a potential 13 posts within the next 18 months and recent conclusion of the Station Commander process, resulting in a pool of 79 candidates. He confirmed that due diligence had been undertaken on temporary promotions and transfers processes. Due to the current circumstances, increased engagement had been undertaken with both candidates and selection panels during the process and had resulted in positive feedback. Event to be organised for the successful Station Commander applicants to offer congratulations and to provide an overview of the expectations of the role within the organisation.

(SS joined the meeting at 1435 hrs)

- 8.1.5 The Committee commented on the turnover of Area Commander and Station Commander within the next 2 years and asked whether any additional support needed to be considered for those taking up these roles. JS advised the Committee that he had been fully engaging with the Leadership and Development Team to review the retirement profile. The Committee were reminded that these posts were being filled through normal promotion process therefore the successful candidates were not new to the Service. In addition, leadership mentoring processes were in place to support newly promoted post holders.
- 8.1.6 JS updated the Committee on future Crew Commander process, which was being supported by Training and Leadership & Development teams, as well as Group Commander and Deputy Assistant Chief Officer processes.
- 8.1.7 The Committee welcomed the update and acknowledged the collaborative work within the Service in preparation and to improve the Service's position.
- 8.1.8 **The Committee noted the report.**

(J Sharp left at 1446 hrs)

9 HMFSI TRAINING OF RETAINED DUTY SYSTEM PERSONNEL ACTION PLAN

- 9.1 PK provided an update to the Committee on the action plan, which has been developed in response to the report published by Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI), relating to the Training of the Retained Duty System (RDS) Personnel. The following key points:
- Action Plan containing 31 actions developed to address the HMFSI's 22 recommendations.
 - Currently 72% complete but would remain live until 2023.
- 9.2 In relation to the initial training, PK advised that the Service now had the ability to deliver this training in modules which would make it more accessible for individuals, however they would still be required to complete their training within a specific time. JD reminded the Committee that the Service were continuing to explore alternative options for delivering courses. He noted that any changes required both time and resources to develop and implement and this needed to be balanced against existing commitments.
- 9.3 **The Committee scrutinised report.**

10 UPDATE: WORKING TOGETHER FRAMEWORK

10.1 Update from Employee Partnership Forum (EPF)

10.1.1 LB advised the EPF meeting scheduled for 18 February 2021 was cancelled.

10.2 Update from Partnership Advisory Forum (PAG)

10.2.1 LB advised the PAG meeting scheduled for 3 March 2021 was cancelled.

11 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

11.1 The Committee queried whether the Red risk ratings were appropriate, when considering the mitigation actions in place. PK advised that the risk register was regularly reviewed and the risk rating were reflective of the impact of COVID and subsequent backlog to address these issues. Given the discussions earlier in the meeting, it was suggested that additional narrative be included in future iterations to help highlight the mitigations actions.

11.3 **The Committee noted the report.**

12 FORWARD PLANNING

12.1 POD Policy Review Schedule Update

12.1.1 The POD Policy Review Schedule Update report was presented to the Committee for information.

12.1.2 The Committee were informed of a discussion at the last Audit & Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) relating to the levels of governance for policies across the organisation and it was suggested that this report could be shared with ARAC members for their awareness. LB outlined the different layers of governance and processes for new, revised and refreshed policies.

12.1.3 AC noted that a specific action to provide an update on this issue, including the links within the scheme of delegation, was due to be provided at the next ARAC meeting (24 March). He further noted the creation of the Good Governance Board could potentially add a further layer of controls and check to ensure appropriate governance during policy development and review.

12.1.4 **The Committee noted the report.**

12.2 Committee Forward Plan Review

12.2.1 The Committee noted the Forward Plan.

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

12.3.1 The following items were identified for future meetings:

- General Policy Governance Routes – Integrated Governance Forum (March 2021)

13 REVIEW OF ACTIONS

13.1 AC confirmed there were no formal actions arising during the meeting.

14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

14.1 The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday 3 June 2021 at 1300 hrs.

14.2 There being no further matters to discuss, the public meeting closed at 1505 hrs.

PRIVATE SESSION

15 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PRIVATE MEETING: 3 DECEMBER 2020

15.1 The minutes of the private meeting held on 3 December 2020 were approved as a true record of the meeting.

16 REMUNERATIONS, APPOINTMENTS AND NOMINATIONS SUB COMMITTEE (RANSc) UPDATE

16.1 The draft minutes of the RANSc meeting on 3 December 2020 had been circulated to the Committee and a verbal update was given on the key issues discussed at the RANSc meeting held earlier today (4 March 2021).

16.2 **The Board noted the draft minutes and verbal update.**

17 KEY CASE UPDATE 2020/21 – QUARTER 3

17.1 SSe presented a report providing an overview of the Discipline, Grievance, Bullying and Harassment Statistics for Quarter 3 2020/21.

17.2 **The Committee noted the report.**