



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

PUBLIC MEETING – STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 4 JUNE 2020 @ 1315 HOURS

CONFERENCE FACILITIES

PRESENT:

Primrose Stark (Chair) (PS)
Bill McQueen (BMcQ)
Malcolm Payton (MP)

Anne Buchanan (AB)
Sid Patten (SP)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Liz Barnes (LB)
Fiona Munro (FM)
Scott Semple (SS)
Paul King (PK)

Director of People and Organisational Development
Head of People and Organisational Development
Head of People and Organisational Development
Temporary Deputy Assistant Chief Officer Training and Employee Development
Deputy Assistant Chief Officer, West Service Delivery Area
Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing
Deputy Head of People and Organisational Development
Chair of SFRS Board
Group Commander, Board Support
Executive Officer Board Support
Board Support /Minutes

John Miller (JM)
Karen Lockhart (KL)
Geri Thomson (GT)
Kirsty Darwent (KD)
Alasdair Cameron (AC)
Heather Greig (HG)
Debbie Haddow (DH)

1 WELCOME

1.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed those present. The virtual meeting protocol was reiterated to the attendees.

2 APOLOGIES

2.1 John Dickie, Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Training, Safety and Assurance
Stuart Stevens, Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Service Delivery
Rachel Scott, Deputy Head of People and Organisational Development
Richard Whetton, Head of Corporate Governance

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

3.1 The Committee discussed and agreed that the Key Case report would be heard in private session due to the small number of individuals involved and confidentiality in line with Standing Orders (Item 9F).

3.2 No further items were identified.

4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

4.1 None.

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 5 MARCH 2020

5.1 LB requested that reference to the People and Training Systems Group to be amended to People, Training and Asset Systems Group.

5.2 **Subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2020 were approved as a true record of the meeting.**

5.3 Matters Arising

5.3.1 Due to the impact of COVID-19, LB highlighted the limited progress on Protection of Vulnerable Group project and the postponement of the Employee Recognition Scheme until 2021.

5.3.2 PS informed the Committee that the RDS spotlight report had been deferred and would now be presented at the next meeting (September 2020).

6 ACTION LOG

6.1 The Committee considered the action log and noted the updates. It was agreed that Action 9.1.1 POD Organisational Chart (05/03/20) would be now be closed and removed.

7. VALUE ADDED STATEMENT

7.1 AC presented Annual Value Added Statement (VAS) for both the Staff Governance Committee and the Remuneration, Appointments and Nomination Sub Committee (RANSc), which would outline evidence of how the Committee supports the effective function of the Board. He noted that the report was discussed at the earlier RANSc meeting and outlined the changes requested.

7.2 Following a brief discussion, it was agreed that a further bullet point would be added under Future work for continue assurance being provided to the Board ensuring relative objectives from AOP and Strategic Plan are being progressed and also for consideration regarding outcomes and benefits together with the Committee supporting the priorities and focus of the POD function. Updated VAS would be circulated for final comment/approval.

ACTION: BST

7.3 **The Committee noted the report.**

8 PERFORMANCE AND RISK REPORT QUARTER 4 2019/20

8.1 LB presented the Committee with the Performance and Risk Report Quarter 4, highlighting the following POD key areas:

- Impact of COVID-19 on priorities and direction of work.
- Necessity to quickly change processes and policies.
- Establishment of COVID-19 Wellbeing Group providing regular communication and support.
- Significant progress in areas including apprenticeships, embedding leadership processes and mental health strategy.

8.2 LB indicated that following positive promotion of mental health issues, the related absence rates had increased and work had begun to analysis this data. It was noted that the Lifelines Initiative would allow the Service to share information including trends, patterns, etc across other UK blue light services.

8.3 LB confirmed that the process for re-engagement of staff had been established and potential challenges overcome, however, to date the Service had not been required to call on this resource.

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

- 8.4 LB updated the Committee on the ongoing positive working relationship with Trade Unions. In regard to discipline and grievance, some cases have been progressed remotely and the Service would continue to monitor the situation on whether all cases could be held remotely.
- 8.5 The Committee commented on the benefits arising from remote working and asked whether these were being captured. LB noted that a Gold Decision Log had been maintained throughout and any lessons learnt would be reviewed and progressed appropriately.
- 8.6 PK updated the Committee on measures put in place to allow remote/online learning to continue and the potential benefits to delivery of same. PK noted that the Service had focused on the maintenance of core skills and data was being collated to capture any recovery/catch up training deemed necessary to mitigate any impact on operational service delivery. Refresher training had also been provided to day duty personnel in preparation for any future need to redeploy to the frontline.
- 8.7 LB confirmed that there were no liabilities relating to fitness assessments being suspended. The Committee were informed of the measures, processes and advice available to personnel. In regard to full medical assessments, trials were continuing on how to undertake these assessments safely.
- 8.8 GT noted that the clinical governance action plan has been updated and work was progressing.
- 8.9 The Committee commented on the benefits and importance of Exit Interviews to help identify any trends or issues within the Service.
- 8.10 The Committee were updated on the continuing work within Workforce Planning to provide accurate information on predicted retirements from the Service. This allows training, ie specialist skills, to be proactively planned and undertaken prior to anticipated retirements.
- 8.11 The Committee were informed of the high number of retirements anticipated following the rejection of the recent pay offer, the future planned intake/recruitment and the current issues with undertaking full medical assessments.
- 8.12 KL informed the Committee that the roll out of dashcams to enhance driver safety had been suspended due to COVID-19 and would recommence once safe to do so.
- 8.13 The Committee welcomed the inclusion of the summary of key issues, the data provided, the progress on the risk movement and the placement on the agenda. The Committee suggested that the information on the challenges for the frontline would be helpful.

8.14 The Committee noted the report.

9 PROGRESS UPDATED: OPERATIONAL TRAINING REVIEW

- 9.1 PK presented a report noting the further actions taken to progress the recommendations contained within the Operational Training Review Final Report, highlighting the following key points:
- Executive Board convened, terms of reference agreed and Project Manager due to be appointed.
 - Due to COVID-19 and the recent Strategic Leadership Team restructure, formal progress has been stilted however, background work had still been progressed.
 - Progress has been made in training for redeployment of day duty staff, re-engagements of former employees, review of firefighter development to competency pathway, core skills e-learning packages and initial review of national training standards.
 - Recruitment of driving instructors commenced. Continuing review of current and future provision of drivers.

- 9.2 The Committee noted the progress being made and welcomed the opportunity to assess the delivery method of business as usual work and the review of national training standards.

(The meeting broke at 1445 hrs and reconvened at 1450 hrs)

10 HEALTH AND WELLBEING

10.1 Draft SFRS Mental Health Strategy Update

- 10.1.1 LB informed the Committee that the consultation period for the Draft SFRS Mental Health Strategy concluded on 2 June 2020 and the responses were being collated. Due to the COVID-19 group being stood up the full Mental Health Board was temporarily suspended; however, the work of the COVID-19 group would be incorporated into the wider mental health work.

- 10.1.2 JM commented on the positive feedback being received through the consultation process. It was the intention for the strategy document to undergo further peer reviews. Work was progressing on communications to officially launch the strategy.

- 10.1.3 The Committee commented on the use of certain terminology within the strategy and made suggestions which JM agreed to review.

10.1.2 The Committee welcomed and noted the report.

10.2 Mental Health Analysis

- 10.2.1 GT presented a report to the Committee providing further analysis to help inform the development of the Mental Health Action Plan in support of the newly established Mental Health Board. The following key areas were highlighted:

- Challenging aspects to manually collate data.
- Identifying links/trends between absence and referral information.
- Overall absence rates have not increased, however, absences attributed to mental health have increased

(Due to technical difficulties, the connection was lost during presentation of this item.)

- 10.2.2 GT informed the Committee that the development of a system was being considered to simplify the ongoing collation of data.

- 10.2.3 In relation to Control absences, GT stated that although a comparison with other Fire and Rescue Services had not been undertaken, there was dedicated support provided to Control personnel. Further support was being explored but this has been impacted by COVID-19. A recent staff survey (Control Personnel) had been carried out by Area Commander Libby Logan to identify how personnel felt they were being supported during the COVID-19 pandemic. GT noted that the progress has not been made in regard to mapping themes identified in the previous staff survey by Control personnel due to COVID-19.

10.2.4 The Committee welcomed and noted the report.

11 HEALTH AND SAFETY

11.1 Asbestos at Work Update

- 11.1.1 KL advised the Committee on the limited progress in partnership with Glasgow City Council due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. An update would be brought back to the next meeting (captured under Item 14.2).

11.1.2 The Committee noted the verbal report.

11.2 **Face Fit Testing – Disposable Respirators**

11.2.1 KL informed the Committee that the West Service Delivery Area pilot programme had concluded last year and was deemed a successful and scalable project which could be rolled out across the Service. Unfortunately, this has been postponed due to COVID-19 and the restricted supplies for FFP3 face masks.

11.2.2 The Committee noted the successful pilot, the programme utilising internal personnel and the future monetary savings.

11.2.3 **The Committee noted the report.**

11.3 **Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Management Arrangements Forward planning Schedule**

11.3.1 KL presented a report and highlighted that a review of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy would be undertaken following the recent restructure within the Strategic Leadership Team.

12 **UPDATE: WORKING TOGETHER FRAMEWORK**

12.1 **Update from Employee Partnership Forum**

12.1.1 Due to no urgent business being brought forward, this meeting was cancelled. The Action Log was circulated and updated by email.

12.1.2 **The Committee noted the verbal update.**

12.2 **Update from Partnership Advisory Forum**

12.2.1 LB noted that the main issue discussed related to the Fire Brigade Union seeking reassurance that the process (working together framework) remained unchanged. This assurance was given albeit the Service had had to adapt its approach, being both flexible and dynamic due to the current unprecedented global crisis.

12.2.2 **The Committee noted the verbal update.**

13 **STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER**

13.1 The risk register was presented and the Committee were reminded that updates for individual risks had also been circulated prior to the meeting.

13.2 PS informed the Committee that the Resolution Advisory Panel meeting to discuss RDS Terms and Conditions was still to be held and options to facilitate this were being explored.

13.3 **The Committee noted the report.**

14 **FORWARD PLANNING**

14.1 **POD Policy Review Schedule Update**

14.1.1 The POD Policy Review Schedule Update report was presented to the Committee and it was stated that the schedule would be further amended to take into account the impact from COVID-19.

14.1.2 The Committee requested that consideration be given to include an update on Whistle Blowing within future reports.

14.1.3 **The Committee noted the report.**

14.2 **Committee Forward Plan Review**

14.2.1 The following items were identified for the September 2020 meeting:

- Update on Asbestos at Work (K Lockhart)
- Spotlight on RDS (F Munro/L Barnes)

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

- 14.3.1 It was suggested that a future workshop be considered to discuss the aspects of industrial relations, restructure of Strategic Leadership Team and benefits realisation linked with the VAS.

15 REVIEW OF ACTIONS

- 15.1 AC confirmed the one action arising during the meeting.

16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 16.1 The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday 10 September 2020 at 1300 hrs.
- 16.2 There being no further matters to discuss, the public meeting closed at 1530 hrs.

PRIVATE SESSION

17 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PRIVATE MEETING: 5 MARCH 2020

- 17.1 The minutes of the private meeting held on 5 March 2020 were approved as a true record of the meeting.

18 PRIVATE ACTION LOG

- 18.1 The Committee considered the action log and noted the update. It was agreed that due date for Action 22.3 Key Case Update (05/03/20) would be extended to September 2020.

19 RANSC UPDATE

- 19.1 The draft minutes of the RANSc meeting on 5 March 2020 had been circulated to the Committee. The Committee noted the key issues discussed at the meeting of RANSc that was held earlier today (4 June 2020).
- 19.2 Update on RDS Terms and Conditions was covered through the public meeting.

20 KEY CASE UPDATE – Q4

- 20.1 FM presented a report providing an overview of the Discipline, Grievance, Bullying and Harassment Statistics for Quarter 4 2019/20.