



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

PUBLIC MEETING - SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

THURSDAY 29 OCTOBER 2020 @ 1000 HRS

BY CONFERENCE FACILITIES

PRESENT:

Kirsty Darwent (Chair) (KD)
Brian Baverstock (BB)
Marieke Dwarshuis (MD)
Bill McQueen (BMcQ)
Primrose Stark (PS)

Nick Barr (NB)
Lesley Bloomer (LBI)
Fiona Thorburn (FT)
Malcolm Payton (MP)
Tim Wright (TW)

IN ATTENDANCE:

John Dickie (JD)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Training, Safety and Assurance
Sarah O'Donnell (SO'D)	Director of Finance and Contractual Services
Mark McAteer (MMcA)	Director of Strategic Planning, Performance and Communications
Stuart Stevens (SS)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Service Delivery
Paul Stewart (PSt)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Service Development
Richard Whetton (RW)	Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance
Alasdair Cameron (AC)	Group Commander Board Support
Debbie Haddow (DH)	Board Support/Minutes

OBSERVERS:

Heather Greig	Board Support Executive Officer
Hilary Sangster	Group Commander Business Support
Asha Narsapur	Legal Services

1 CHAIR'S WELCOME

1.1 KD opened the meeting and welcomed those present and participating via Skype. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the Chief Officer would not be attending the meeting and his agenda items would be presented by nominated representatives.

2 APOLOGIES

2.1 Anne Buchanan, Board Member
Mhairi Wylie, Board Member
Martin Blunden, Chief Officer
Ross Haggart, Deputy Chief Officer
Liz Barnes, Director of People and Organisational Development

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- 3 CONSIDERATION OF AND DECISION ON ANY ITEMS TO BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE**
- 3.1 The Board agreed that the Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20, Strategic Review Development Options, Employers Liability Claim Against SFRS and Future Vision - Timeline would be taken in private due to confidential commercial/financial information (Standing Order 9E), matters relating to individuals (Standing Order 9A) and matters relating to consultations/negotiations (Standing Order 9F), respectively.
- 3.2 No further private items were identified.
- 4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**
- 4.1 On behalf of the Board, the Chair declared their interest in Item 13 Board Members Remuneration Review.
- 5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: THURSDAY 27 AUGUST 2020**
- 5.1 The following amendment was noted and agreed:
- Item 13 Internal Audit Plan 2020/21 – BB requested that the text “*It was further noted that the Auditors would develop the audit plan...*” be amended to “*It was further noted that the Auditors would develop the audit remit...*” Following a brief discussion, it was agreed that the action recorded (audit remit to be circulated to the Board for information only) would stand.
- 5.2 **Subject to the above amendment being made, the minutes of the meeting held on 27 August 2020 were approved as a true record of the meeting.**
- 6 ACTION LOG**
- 6.1 The Board considered the action log and noted the updates.
- 6.2 **Members noted the updated Action Log and approved the removal of completed actions.**
- 7 DECISION LOG**
- 7.1 The Board considered the Decision Log.
- 7.2 **Members noted the updated Decision Log.**
- 8 CHAIR’S REPORT**
- 8.1 The Chair presented her report noting events which had occurred since the Board meeting held on 27 August 2020, highlighting:
- Sincere condolences were offered to all families and friends following the recent deaths of colleagues Stephen Hillan, Debbie McMahon, Yvonne Talbot and retired colleagues, Clive Halliday, Douglas MacKaill, Andy Davidson and Ronnie Low.
 - Board Members mid-year reviews have been completed. Emerging themes were importance of positive and appropriate relationships between Board/Strategic Leadership Team (SLT), reflections on remoteness, appreciation of early engagement with SLT and strategic thinking. These would be combined with themes from the Board Only meeting and would be shared in due course.
 - National Joint Council Meeting – Proposal to extend Tripartite Agreement to the end of the financial year.
 - Integrated Governance Forum held on 8 October 2020. Updates were provided on operational training, clinical governance, reflection on lessons learnt on Board and Committee scrutiny, how to take risk forward in corporate papers.
- 8.2 It was noted that formal feedback from Ash Denham, Minister for Community Safety, following the Ministerial Annual Performance Review on 5 October 2020 was expected but had not yet been received.

8.3 The Board noted the report.

9 CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT

9.1 The Chief Officer's report noting events which had occurred since the Board meeting held on 27 August 2020 was included with the Board papers.

9.2 SS provided a verbal update on preparations for Bonfire Night, highlighting:

- Two strands to preparing for bonfire period, preventative and response.
- Launched Bonfire and Halloween Thematic Action Plan, engagement delivery via digital platform, utilised Youth Volunteer communication networks, linked with Youth Link Scotland, Young Scot and Scottish Youth Parliament.
- Supported 3 Scottish Government's Building Safer Communities campaigns – Impact of private fireworks displays, Trading Standards (point of sale guidance) and Crimestoppers' fireworks rules and regulations campaign.
- Ministerial review (use and availability of fireworks) recommendations to be published on 3 November 2020 and had helped build some partnership working.
- All public organised firework displays have been cancelled due to COVID-19. Potential for an increase in unofficial bonfires/fireworks and antisocial behaviour.
- National Event Plan developed to provide a strategic overarching plan and processes to manage spate conditions over this period. The Plan will take effect from 31 October to 8 November 2020, inclusive.
- Each Operational Control Centre will have a dedicated event support room which would be activated from 31 October.
- Police Scotland had convened multi-agency command centres.
- Minister for Community Safety has been briefed and was supportive of the pre-planning, preventative and response arrangements in place.

9.3 JD provided a verbal update on COVID-19, highlighting:

- Recent cluster at West Service Delivery Area Headquarters and the subsequent review and actions taken.
- Since March 2020, a dedicated Health and Safety team has been tasked with producing a suite of documents including workplace risk assessment, guidance/advice posters, RIDDOR reporting, etc.
- Currently 81% of all SFRS premises have been deemed COVID secure and work is continuing to ensure all premises are deemed COVID secure.
- Fourteen incidents have been reported to the HSE under RIDDOR. Overall numbers considered small.
- Numerous meetings had been held to provide support and advice to Operational Control, corporate headquarters buildings, asset and resource centres and training centres to ensure COVID secure status.
- Provided support for the Health and Safety Return to Work video, risk assessments for various activities ie IFA exams, courses, etc.

9.4 The Board commended the excellent work undertaken by both the Health and Safety and POD functions.

9.5 The Board queried whether there were recurring themes in the recent COVID-19 cases within the Service. JD noted that there were behavioural issues across the country, not specific to the Service and the issues with the continuous changes to regulations/guidelines and the relatively small number of cases within the Service. SS commented on the inconsistency across health boards in applying and prioritising test and protect for SFRS personnel and the subsequent impact on service delivery. This has been raised with Scottish Government. A meeting had been scheduled with the Director of Public Health and Police Scotland to discuss the impact and identify mitigating actions later today.

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9.6 The Board questioned the potential impact of a second wave and test and protect on staff availability. SS noted that the numbers were still lower than the first wave but were starting to increase and commented on the potential implications of test and protect on individual locations. He noted that guidance, which would be in line with the Scottish Government's tier system, was being prepared to allow Local Senior Officers the ability to undertake duties based on local circumstances. A moratorium had also been put on leave to help maximise availability.

9.7 The Board were reminded of Ken Knight's role as Strategic Advisor to the Home Office, as part of the review of England and Wales fire services and his involvement with Crown Premises in England and the British Standards Institution. It was agreed that information on individual's designation/role would be helpful in future reports.

ACTION: MB

9.8 **The Board noted the report and verbal updates.**

10 **SERVICE TRANSFORMATION UPDATE**

10.1 PSt updated Members in regard to Service Transformation matters which had occurred since the Board meeting held on 27 August 2020, highlighting the following:

- Strategic Review Development Options and Future Vision - Timeline report would be presented within the private session.
- Senior Management Board held a meeting on 14 October 2020.
- Transformation and Major Projects Committee next meeting was scheduled for 5 November 2020 where several change requests would be presented.

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

11 **COMMITTEE UPDATES**

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

11.1.1 BB reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 8 October 2020 and provided a verbal update, highlighting the following:

- Internal Audit's SFRS Risk Management Final Report.
- Internal Audit's renewed and refocused process for implementing audit recommendations.
- Progress report on Audit Scotland recommendation report (May 2018).
- In regard to recommendations being actioned timeously, assurances were provided on new processes for agreeing implementation dates and rigorous monitoring of same.
- Risk Spotlight on the *Ability to link financial performance to delivery of objectives* and the Committee were content on the controls in place.
- Draft Annual Report and Accounts were discussed and recommended for approval by the Board (Agenda Item 24).
- Two reports were taken in private session and focussed on Fraud Assessment Exercise (Internal) and SFRS Response to Audit Scotland Red Flag Procurement report.

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

(S Stevens left the meeting at 1055 hrs)

11.2 **Service Delivery Committee (SDC)**

Deferred to later in the meeting.

11.3 **Staff Governance Committee (SGC)**

11.3.1 PS reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 10 September 2020 and referred the Board to the attached draft minutes. The following was highlighted:

- Reporting aligned to Annual Operating Plan.

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- Impact of COVID-19 was affecting all areas of delivery, several processes have been adapted and assurance was provided on the Service continuing to meet our requirements and learning new ways to adapt existing processes.
- Update on staff survey with significant impact on actions including increased engagement through this COVID-19 period. Potential delay to the next staff survey and the Committee has requested an update report, including the recommendation, reason for delay, any mitigating actions and the final decision of SLT.
- Update on Retained and Volunteer Duty Systems and Training for Retained Duty System personnel Action plan.
- Revision of Disciplinary policy and the role of Board Members. Capability Policy still to be revised.

11.3.2 In regard to the potential delaying of the next staff survey, the Board commented on the current momentum and hard work undertaken following the last staff survey and the potential negative connotations from delaying the staff survey. PSt noted that the Committee expressed similar concerns and this was the reason an update report would be provided.

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

11.4 Transformation and Major Projects Committee (TMPC)

11.4.1 FT reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 6 August 2020 and referred the Board to the attached draft minutes. The following was highlighted:

- Committee workshop held on 16 September 2020 and focused on Command and Control Mobilising System and People, Training, Finance and Assets System.
- Future workshops to be considered to allow the Committee to gain greater understanding, offer support and scrutiny on projects.
- Next meeting scheduled for 5 November 2020.

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

12 BOARD FORWARD PLAN SCHEDULE 2021/22

12.1 MMcA presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the proposed scheduling of Board and Committee related meetings covering the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation, it was noted that there may be a need for some flexibility on dates and business being taken forward.

12.2 The Chair and Deputy Chair to have a greater oversight on the programme for future Board Strategy/Information and Development days.

12.3 **The Board approved the proposed 2021/22 Forward Plan Schedule.**

13 BOARD MEMBERS REMUNERATION REVIEW

13.1 On behalf of the Accountable Officer (MB), MMcA presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the proposed remuneration review and uplift in line with Public Sector Pay Policy (PSPP) covering the periods 2019/20 and 2020/21. The following key points were highlighted:

- Board Member's rates have remained unchanged since the inception of SFRS in 2013.
- Proposed to backdate pay uplift to 2019/20.
- Accountable Officer had confirmed the affordability of this increase.

13.2 The Chair reiterated the Board's interest in this matter and, for transparency, noted that it had been scrutinised by the Remuneration, Appointments and Nominations Sub Committee (RANSC). If approved, future reviews would be undertaken on an annual basis by RANSC and would only be brought back to the Board by exception.

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- 13.3 It was confirmed that the PSPP applies to all Non-Executives on public sector Boards, however, the SFRS Board had not previously participated in this process.
- 13.4 The Board were informed that Support staff were also covered by the PSPP and Uniformed staff were negotiated through the National Joint Council.
- 13.5 It was agreed that the Core Brief would be amended to state that Board Members had not received any uplift since 2013.

ACTION: BST

- 13.6 **The Board agreed that Board member remuneration from April 2019 be adjusted in line with PSPP and that henceforth the application to Non-Execs be reviewed by RANSC on an annual basis. Any recommendation to defer from that would be brought back to the Board.**

14 RESOURCE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2020

- 14.1 SO'D presented a report advising the Board of the resource budget position for the period ending 30 September 2020. SO'D outlined the analysis of the financial position and referred Members to Appendix A of the report, which identified the current resource position showing a forecast year-end underspend of £1.548 million. The forecast position includes anticipated costs for COP26 and net savings to date in respect of COVID-19.
- 14.2 In relation to Wholetime retirals being higher than budgeted, it was noted that they may be a result of the outcomes of the pay offer, however, Finance, POD and Service Delivery were working together to identify the workforce planning implications in the short, medium and long term.
- 14.3 In relation to the additional Fire Investigation posts, it was noted that there were no issues within the current financial year and work is ongoing to review the structure within this area.
- 14.4 In relation to utilising the underspend, SO'D noted that options were being investigated to minimise this including temporary staffing costs.
- 14.5 In regard to the projected underspend, SO'D assured the Board that all options were being explored to utilise any underspend and this included enabling Local Senior Officer access to the underspend. Unfortunately, due to the timescales involved, it would not be possible to undertake new procurement or recruitment processes. SO'D reminded the Board of the need to be mindful of potential overtime during this period and future implications for delayed operational training courses. SO'D noted that the Service had highlighted future budget implications and challenges into the Justice Committee pre-budget scrutiny.
- 14.6 The Board asked for consideration to be given to participatory budgets to assist local communities. SO'D agreed in principle, however, given the timescales involved and the resources required to apply this fairly over the 32 local authorities, this was not appropriate at this time.
- 14.7 **The Board scrutinised the resource budget position for the period ending 30 September 2020.**

15 CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT 2020/21 – SEPTEMBER 2020

- 15.1 SO'D presented a report advising the Board of actual and committed expenditure against the 2020/21 capital budget for the period ending 30 September 2020. It was anticipated that the revised budget of £37.524 million would be spent by the end of the

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financial year.

- 15.2 SO'D reminded the Board that an additional £4.35 million was received from Scottish Government, future capital receipts for Mounthooly and the work being undertaken to realign budgets for larger projects such as McDonald Road which was progressing well.
- 15.3 SO'D highlighted the possibility of receiving additional funds to support the Service's development of electric vehicle fleet and infrastructure.
- 15.4 In regard to the additional £4.35 million, SO'D confirmed that as part of an economic stimulus 31 projects received additional funding from Scottish Government.
- 15.5 The Board asked whether consideration was being given to the potential future footprint of the Service when commissioning and investing in current premises. SO'D stated that the outcomes of the Service Delivery Model Programme were keenly awaited, however, it was only right and proper to maintain current premises to an appropriate standard.
- 15.6 SO'D confirmed that work was ongoing to ensure the budget would be spent by the end of the financial year and reiterated her confidence in the team's ability to deliver.
- 15.7 **The Board scrutinised the level of actual and committed expenditure for the period ending 30 September 2020.**

*(Meeting broke at 1147 hrs and reconvened at 1155 hrs)
(SS rejoined the meeting)*

11 COMMITTEE UPDATES

11.2 Service Delivery Committee (SDC)

11.2.1 NB reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 17 September 2020 and referred the Board to the attached draft minutes. The following was highlighted:

- Clinical governance update, Grenfell Tower Update report and spotlighted Service Delivery Risk 6 (Ability to maintain an effective level of capacity and resource within Service delivery to meet statutory duties)
- Workshop scheduled for 10 November 2020 to discuss UFAS, concurrency of significant events, Firefighters currency vs competencies and further explore Service Delivery Risk 6.

11.2.2 Grenfell Tower Fire Update Report

SS presented a report to the Board providing an update on the work undertaken by the Service in conjunction with relevant partners, following the Grenfell tower fire tragedy in June 2017. The following key points were highlighted:

- Due to the reprioritisation due to COVID-19, there had been slippage in the timescales agreed by the work group, however, this was now back on track.
- Thirty one actions in total, 11 were now complete and significant progress had been made on the remaining 20 actions. Additional work/evidence has been requested prior to closing further actions.
- Number of actions rely on a live play exercise being undertaken, however, due to COVID-19 this has not been possible.
- National guidance on high rise incidents had not yet been published, however, internal High Risk SOP had been reviewed and revised to include post Grenfell learning.
- National High Rise Inventory information to be integrated into the Operational Intelligence process.
- Anticipated completion confirmed by June 2021.
- Scottish Government to publish a progress report on Post Grenfell Activity and Phase 1 Recommendations.

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- 11.2.3 In regard to the Service meeting the spirit of the recommendations, SS noted that some recommendations were specific to London Fire Brigade but given the significant nature of the incident it was deemed appropriate that these should also be considered.
- 11.2.4 SS confirmed that the Service had comprehensive information on building design for all high-rise buildings and that the Stay Put advice was still the recommended approach within high-rise premises in Scotland.
- 11.2.5 SS confirmed that additional detail on prioritising recommendations would be included in further iterations of the update report.
- 11.2.6 It was noted that it would be difficult to correlate any interdependencies between the reduction in Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) and the increase in fire fatalities. It was further noted that, although the overall number of HFSV had reduced, the Service had continued to target high risk/vulnerable individuals.
- 11.2.7 In regard to lobbying for legislative change, SS confirmed the Service's involvement with Scottish Government's Building Standards and their ability to influence changes to building standards legislation.
- 11.2.8 **The Board noted the draft minutes and the Grenfell Tower Fire Update Report.**

16 RESOURCE BUDGET OUTTURN REPORT 2019/20

- 16.1 SO'D presented a report to the Board advising the final Resource Budget position for the financial year 2019/20, which shows an underspend of £1.392 million. To give this context, it was noted that £1.50 million was being held back for an anticipated pay deal, £200K was being held back for Retained Duty System Terms and Conditions and a further £200K arose due to delayed delivery of smoke alarms.
- 16.2 The Board queried the overspend in insurance costs (£800K), SO'D stated that a consistent approach had now been applied and this figure was an accrual of all insurance excess liabilities.
- 16.3 The Board queried the overspend in TUPE costs (£100K), SO'D noted that this figure was the difference between the estimated and actual position. The Board were reminded of the challenges in obtaining pensions information from local authorities.
- 16.4 SO'D informed the Board that it was normal practice to capitalise employee costs to support the delivery of major projects ie Command and Control Futures. However, due to delays the delivery of this project had not be realised and therefore it was appropriate to realign employee costs back into the Resource budget.
- 16.5 The Board acknowledged the impact of COVID-19 in the last quarter of the financial year and good position achieved.
- 16.6 **The Board scrutinised the Resource Budget Outturn Report 2019/20.**

17 CAPITAL BUDGET OUTTURN REPORT 2019/20

- 17.1 SO'D presented a report advising the Board of the final Capital Budget position for the financial year ending 31 March 2020, which was an underspend of £0.002 million. The breakdown of investment was included within the report and would be communicated both internally and externally as appropriate.
- 17.2 The Board congratulated all those involved in achieving this excellent position.
- 17.3 **The Board scrutinised the Capital Budget Outturn Report 2019/20.**

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18 REVISED ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN 2020/21

18.1 MMcA presented the revised Annual Operating Plan (AOP) 2020/21 report to the Board for information and highlighted the following:

- Initial revision of AOP highlighted 64% of actions would be impacted on by COVID-19. Further revision undertaken to ensure full consideration had been taken of the impact of COVID-19.
- Benefits of the 3-year rolling plan.
- Only critical aspects remaining on the AOP.
- Change Request Log has been developed to capture rationale for proposed changes.
- Overall reduction of actions from 63 to 43 and milestones have reduced from 218 to 142.
- Potential for future revisions to the AOP given the ongoing pandemic situation.

18.2 MMcA advised the Board that following recommendation from the Senior Management Board, the Strategic Leadership Team authorised the proposed changes.

18.3 MMcA noted that Scottish Government had been sighted on the revised AOP. MMcA to check whether there was any requirement to engage with local communities, local authorities, community planning partnerships, etc.

ACTION: MMcA

18.4 **The Board noted the Revised Annual Operating Plan 2020/21.**

19 RISK THEMES

19.1 None.

20 FORWARD PLAN

20.1 AC presented the Forward Plan noting that this would be kept under review and proposed agenda items would be prioritised due to the ongoing pandemic situation.

21 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

21.1 The next meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on Thursday 17 December 2020 at 1000 hrs.

21.2 There being no further matters to discuss in public, the meeting closed at 1237 hours.

PRIVATE SESSION

22 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PRIVATE MEETING: THURSDAY 27 AUGUST 2020

22.1 The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

23 ACTION LOG

23.1 The Board considered the action log and noted the update.

24 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2019/20

24.1 SO'D presented the Draft Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020 to the Board for approval. SO'D extended her thanks to staff and External Auditors involved in preparation of these documents during this particularly challenging year. SO'D confirmed that the accounts had been presented at the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) meeting on 8 October 2020.

24.2 **The Board approved the Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 and authorised the Chief Officer, as the Accountable Officer, to sign and submit this on behalf of the Service.**

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25 EMPLOYERS LIABILITY CLAIM AGAINST SFRS

25.1 SO'D presented a report to the Board seeking approval for the settlement of an Employers Liability Claim against the Service.

25.2 **The Board approved the recommendation to instruct Clyde & Co, acting on behalf of Zurich Municipal Insurance, to settle the claim.**

26 STRATEGIC REVIEW DEVELOPMENT OPTION

26.1 MMcA presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the Strategic Leadership Team's recommended option for strengthening the portfolio and programme management capability and capacity.

26.2 **The Board approved the Strategic Leadership Team's recommendation to progress Option 5 (Blended Approach).**

27 FUTURE VISION - TIMELINE

27.1 PSt presented a report to the Board outlining the proposed timeline for deliverables associated with the Service Delivery Model Programme (SDMP) alongside the wider timeline associated with organisational change preparations.

27.2 **The Board had fully scrutinised the proposed timelines, noted that it was subject to change and agreed that it would routinely be reviewed going forward.**