



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

PUBLIC MEETING - SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

THURSDAY 28 OCTOBER 2021 @ 1000 HRS

BY CONFERENCE FACILITIES

PRESENT:

Kirsty Darwent, Chair (KD)
Stuart Ballingall (SB)
Steve Barron (SBa)
Lesley Bloomer (LBI)
Malcolm Payton (MP)
Mhairi Wylie (MW)

Fiona Thorburn, Deputy Chair (FT)
Nick Barr (NB)
Brian Baverstock (BB)
Angiolina Foster (AF)
Paul Stollard (PSt)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Martin Blunden (MB)
Ross Haggart (RH)
John Dickie (JD)
Mark McAteer (MMcA)
Iain Morris (IM)
Stuart Stevens (SS)
John Thomson (JT)
Alasdair Cameron (AC)
Heather Greig (HG)
Debbie Haddow (DH)

Chief Officer
Deputy Chief Officer
Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Training, Safety and Assurance
Director of Strategic Planning, Performance and Communications
Acting Director of Asset Management
Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Service Delivery
Acting Director of Finance and Procurement
Group Commander Board Support
Executive Officer Board Support
Board Support/Minutes

OBSERVERS:

Robert Scott, HMFSI
Lyndsey Gaja, Head of POD

1 CHAIR'S WELCOME

- 1.1 KD opened the meeting and welcomed those participating and observing via MS Team.
- 1.2 The Board were reminded to raise their hands, in accordance with the remote meeting protocol, should they wish to ask a question.
- 1.3 This meeting would be recorded and published on the public website.

2 APOLOGIES

- 2.1 Tim Wright, Board Member
Liz Barnes, Director of People and Organisational Development
Paul Stewart, Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Service Development

OFFICIAL

- 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 202/21* would be taken in private due to confidential financial matters (Standing Order 9E).

- 4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**
4.1 None.

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: THURSDAY 26 AUGUST 2021

- 5.1 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

5.1.1

The minutes of the meetings held on 26 August 2021 were approved as a true record of the meeting.

5.2

6 ACTION LOG

- 6.1 The Board considered the action log noting the updates and agreed the removal of completed actions.

Item 12.3 Annual Governance Review of Board and Committee Related Items (29/04/2021): Regarding delegated authority, JT provided further clarify that there was an existing requirement within the Financial Regulations for Board authorisation on capital budget virements over £1million.

- 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 26 August 2021. The following key points were highlighting:

- Continuing discussions with Scottish Government regarding funding (meeting scheduled later today) as well as routine conversations to discuss the future direction and ambitions of the Service.
- Board Development Away Days (25-26 October) were both informative and beneficial for both the Board and Strategic Leadership Team.

- 8.2 **The Board noted the report.**

9 CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT

- 9.1 The Chief Officer presented his report noting events which had occurred since the Board meeting held on 26 August 2021. The following key points were highlighting:

- Recent retirements of 4 long serving personnel: WC Iain Campbell, WC Brian Hughes, FF(C) Roddy McAlister and DACO Paul King.

- 9.2 In addition to the written report, the Chief Officer provided a verbal update on the following key areas and risks:

- Unprecedented disruption in the supply chain for construction materials, due to the pandemic and Brexit. This represents a significant risk to the delivery of the planned capital programme and the Service's ability to fully spend the capital budget. The main causes and impact of the unprecedented disruption were outlined.
- Investment in battery powered rescue equipment to reduce risks within the Service.
- Command and Control Futures remains a high risk, however good progress was being made.

OFFICIAL

- Health and wellbeing of staff remains a prominent risk. Measures were being taken to review and reduce workloads in order to safely deliver Conference of Parties (COP26) and continue to support staff through the continuing impacts of Covid.
- Pressures on future capital budgets. Ten-year risk based capital budget to be developed, which prioritises future investment necessary to ensure that the Service continues to maintain firefighter safety, protect and serve the communities of Scotland, meet environmental requirements and maintain efficient and effective systems to run the Service. Outline of investment required due to RAAC panels. Further discussion to be held at a future Board Strategy Day.
- Report on the Service's preparation of COP26 would be provided at the next Strategy Day.

9.3 The Board were reminded that the Annual Operating Plan (AOP) had been reviewed in August 2021 to reduce workloads and pressure on staff. Due to the continuing presence of Covid, the AOP would be further reviewed and brought back to the Board.

9.4 KD informed the Board that a response had been received from Ash Regan, Minister of Community Safety following the Annual Performance Review on 5 October 2021. The Minister commented positively on the Service's response to Covid, preparations for COP26 and future ambition on environmental issues.

9.5 **The Board noted the report.**

10 COMMITTEE UPDATES

10.1 Change Committee (CC)

10.1.1 FT reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 5 August 2021 and noted that the draft minutes were previously circulated and discussed. The next meeting of the Committee was scheduled for 4 November 2021 and highlighted the business being presented:

- Major Projects: Retained/Volunteer Duty System Strategy, West Asset Resources Centre, People, Training, Finance and Asset Systems Programme
- Portfolio Office Progress update
- General discussion on the Committee's role relating to risk.
- Risk Spotlight (Strategic Risk 8 - Ability to anticipate and adapt to a changing environment through innovation and improved performance)
- Period update and further scrutiny of Command and Control Futures.

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

10.2 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC)

10.2.1 BB noted that the Committee held a public meeting on 14 October 2021 and provided a verbal update, highlighting the following:

- Internal Audit's Final report on Remote Working: Broad ranging report which reflected good practice by the Service and noted the areas of improvements. The Committee commended the measures put in place by the Service at the height of the pandemic.
- Draft Risk Management Policy was scrutinised and recommended for Board approval (Agenda Item 13).
- Draft Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy was scrutinised and recommended for Board approval (Agenda Item 14).
- Deloitte's Audit Dimensions and Best Value (Wider scope) report, which was the subject of the Committee's special meeting on 26 August 2021, was presented. It was noted that with one exception all recommendations were accepted and being implemented.

OFFICIAL

- During the private session, the Draft Annual Report and Accounts were scrutinised and recommended for Board approval, subject to satisfactory conclusion of the outstanding issues. (Agenda Item 24).

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

10.3 **People Committee (PC)**

10.3.1 MW reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 9 September 2021 and referred the Board to the attached draft minutes. MW highlighted the following:

- Awareness of the continual impact of Covid on staff.
- Encouraged by the increased number of recruits.
- Assured by the co-ordination of recruitment whilst noting challenges within the current marketplace.
- Positive assistance with Lifelines Scotland to develop methods to support personnel.
- Positive developments and innovative delivery of training and the long-term benefits of a blended approach.
- An area of concern remains the increase of acts of violence against personnel, particularly over the upcoming bonfire period.
- Importance of the Covid Recognition Scheme to recognise the efforts of personnel.
- Recognition of the Leadership of Change Programme (virtual delivery) recommencing.

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

10.4 **Service Delivery Committee (SDC)**

10.4.1 NB reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 1 September 2021 and referred the Board to the attached draft minutes. NB highlighted the following:

- Service Delivery Update report contained additional details on the Operational Control contingency planning.
- New format of the Quarterly Performance Report was well received.
- HMFSI Action Plans were scrutinised and noted good progress being made.
- Update on the Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) review project.
- Update on the Clinical Governance Framework.
- Risk spotlight on water supply/hydrants noting the good progressing being made in regard to the Service Level Agreement, internal recruitment, improved data capture and the de-escalation of risk.
- Spotlight on Automatic External Defibrillators.
- HMFSI Chief Inspector would be invited to all future Committee meeting, as an attendee.
- Series of reports focusing on climate change aspect relating to service delivery would be presented at future meetings.

10.4.2 Grenfell Tower Fire Update

SS provided the Board with 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:

- Update Report 8 presented to the Committee, noting 17 actions remained outstanding. Of which, 14 actions were on track for completion, 2 actions had been extended due to further testing/training being required and one action had been closed.
- Successful delivery of large scale practical exercise in October 2021 to test new methodology. The HMFSI attended this exercise as part of their thematic inspection on Firefighting in High Rise Buildings. Further exercises scheduled for November 2021.

OFFICIAL

- Phase 2 Grenfell enquiry was ongoing and focused on wider matters relating to London Fire Brigade. Scottish Government have convened a working group to review and analysis the learning of Phase 2 outcomes. This working group would meet bi-monthly and report directly into the Ministerial Working Group. Anticipated that recommendations and learning would be forthcoming.

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

(F Thorburn left the meeting at 1040 hrs)

11 **BOARD FORWARD PLAN SCHEDULE 2022/21**

11.1 MMcA presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the proposed scheduling of Board and Committee related meetings covering the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, which supported a balance of face to face and virtual meetings. MMcA noted that the Strategic Leadership Team would continue to scrutinise the Strategy Day Programme at their formal monthly meetings.

11.2 **The Board approved the proposed 2022/23 Forward Plan Schedule**

12 **SFRS LONG TERM STRATEGIC VISION: UPDATED DOCUMENT AND FINAL ENGAGEMENT DETAIL**

12.1 MMcA presented a report to the Board seeking approval for the publication of the updated version of the Long-Term Vision (LTV) document. He highlighted the following:

- Public consultation concluded in July 2021.
- LTV document subsequently reviewed following the public consultation.
- Majority of respondents (80%) agreed that the vision was the right direction of travel for the Service.
- Strong focus on working with communities and key partners.
- Previous feedback from the Board resulted in the document being re-edited. Appendix B details the key revisions.
- Mission statement to remain “Working together for a safer Scotland”
- Purpose statement to remain and a plain English version was included in the LTV document.
- Four strategic long-term intensions, principals and priorities are set out in the LTV document and the language has been simplified to ensure greater understanding.

12.2 The Board were reminded that the LTV document had been previously scrutinised and subsequently amended following earlier feedback.

12.3 The Board acknowledged the level of engagement with staff and noted their aspirations for this to be replicated in stakeholder engagement going forward.

12.4 As far as can be determined, MMcA confirmed that only one equality group responded to consultation.

12.5 The Board noted the comment on too many policies and procedures within the consultation feedback. SS reminded the Board of the current project to digitise and streamline operational documentation. MMcA further noted that a governance framework was being developed and this would also help simplify and streamline policies across the Service.

12.6 The Board commented on the feedback and insight gathered during the consultation and queried how aspects of the consultation, not specific to the LTV document, could be utilised and benefit the Service going forward. MMcA assured the Board that every comment/feedback had been captured and that he has commenced discussions with Director of Service Development, Head of Portfolio Office and Head of Governance, Strategy & Performance to identify how the Service starts to bring forward the output of

OFFICIAL

the vision, taking into consideration the ongoing national framework consultation, and how this develops into the Strategic Plan and change dimension. The themes identified (Appendix C) will form part of these discussions and be considered in future plans. Future strategy day session to be scheduled to discuss further (December 2021).

12.7 MMcA outlined the intention to publish “plan on a page” version, along with other materials as part of the ongoing communications with staff and stakeholders.

12.8 The Board thanked all those involved for their hard work during the entire process and production of this document.

12.9 **The Board approved the publication of the revised Long Term Strategic Vision.**

13 RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

13.1 JT presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the Risk Management Policy. The following key points were highlighted:

- Draft policy scrutinised and recommended by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee at their last meeting (14 October 2021).
- Directorate Risks have been developed and aligned with the Strategic Risk register which was developed and agreed by the Board and Strategic Leadership Team.
- Policy reflects the risk maturity profile, in terms of the Service’s intention to become Risk Managed and the recommendations from previous Internal Audit reports.
- Policy was based on current practice and covers policy statement, processes, roles and responsibility and current documentation to support the process
- Policy has been developed with an understanding that the risk appetite approach was defined, albeit that the risk appetite was still to be determined. Future strategy Day session scheduled (January 2022).
- Policy will cover project risks and their escalation through Directorate risks, albeit the process was still being developed.

13.2 The Board commented on the potential benefits of mapping Board risks to the assurance routes. JT noted that work had commenced to review assurance mapping within the Service and this would include risk. RW confirmed that the assurance framework formed part of the Annual Governance Review and this would be brought back to the Board in March/April 2022.

13.3 In regard to eLearning module, JT noted that this was currently being developed. However, this was supplemental to the “on the job” training and engagement being delivered by the Audit & Risk team to ensure that there is a greater understanding of risk and mitigations across the Service.

13.4 At the recent Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, BB confirmed that the Committee recommended this policy for approval and noted the good work being done in this area. He noted and welcomed the future strategy day session on risk mapping and the development to improve the focus on project risks.

13.5 In regard to the risk management maturity, JT advised that the anticipated timescale for the Service to move from Risk Defined to Risk Managed would be approx. 2 years. This would ensure that all actions were addressed and fully embedded within the Service.

13.6 **The Board approved the Risk Management Policy.**

14 ANTI FRAUD AND CORRUPTION POLICY

14.1 JT presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy. The following key points were highlighted:

- Draft policy scrutinised and recommended by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee at their last meeting (14 October 2021).

OFFICIAL

- Policy defines the fraud framework for the Service to minimise the risk of fraud and was based on best practice identified through internal audits.
- Policy includes a policy statement, roles and responsibilities, fraud framework, reporting and enforcement of policy.

14.2 In regard to the Fraud Triangle, the Board raised the potential to incorporate reference to the SFRS Values, due to the values driven nature of the Service, and reducing any potential rationalising of fraud. It was noted that this would need to be based on evidence of positive influence and could perhaps be considered for the next iteration of the policy.

14.3

The Board approved the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy.

15 CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT 2021/22 – SEPTEMBER 2021

15.1 JT presented a report advising the Board of the actual and committed expenditure against the 2021/22 capital budget position for the period ending 30 September 2021 and sought approval for budget virements totalling £3.410m. The following key points were highlighted:

- Additional funding received from Scottish Enterprise for the Low Carbon Appliance Project (£0.500million) and Scottish Government's Green Public Sector Estate De-Carbonisation Scheme (4 grants totalling £2.135million). Thanks were extended to the Assets and Environmental Teams for securing this additional funding.
- Revised capital budget (£36.622million).
- Earlier acknowledgement of risk to capital spend. However, a risk remains regarding the condition and suitability of the asset portfolio and the inadequacies of the budget to address these issues.
- Current overall spend was £27.185million (74%).
- Current challenges were outlined within the Chief Officer's Update (agenda item 9).
- Proposed budget virements were to reprioritise spend on individual projects (West Asset Resource Centre, McDonald Road Refurbishment and Power Rescue Equipment, etc).
- Confirmation of future budget virements were anticipated.

15.2 To provide further clarification, IM advised the Board that the proposed budget virements remained in line with the 3-year Capital Plan previously approved by the Board and the virements reflected the rescheduling of the capital monies within projects.

15.3 In recognition of earlier discussion regarding risk to the capital spend, the Board queried whether the Service would be able to fully spend the budget. IM advised the Board that discussions were taking place with partner agencies, to ensure that the Service had the flexibility to spread funding grants spending over 2 financial years or between projects to maintain deliverability.

15.4 To gain a greater understanding, the Board requested that consideration be given to provide an update on the balance between energy efficiency and zero carbon energy systems.

15.5 The Board acknowledged and congratulated the team on securing the project grant funding.

15.6 **The Board scrutinised the level of actual and committed expenditure for the period ending 30 September 2021 and approved the budget virements totalling £3.410million.**

(Meeting broke at 1125 hrs and reconvened 1140 hrs)

16 RESOURCE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2021

OFFICIAL

16.1 JT presented a report advising the Board of the resource budget position for the period ending 30 September 2021. JT outlined the analysis of the financial position and referred Members to Appendix A of the report, which identified the current resource position showing a current year to date overspend of £1.173m and a forecasted year-end underspend of £0.320m. This forecast position was on the basis that additional funding would be received to support the Services investment in COP26. Trace & Protect and Emergency Service Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP). Spend to date for these projects were (£0.761million). The following key points were highlighted:

- Budget virement for professional fees in respect of the protection of vulnerable group (PVG) costs and medical supplies. Reallocation of £0.047million between Employee Other and Supplies & Services.
- Main financial risks and overall summary were detailed in Appendix A.
- High risk areas remain overtime, recruitment, holiday pay/TOiL accrual and the ongoing impact of Covid.
- Forecast of main variations:
- Employee costs (£0.500million overspend) due to wholtime pay offer and increased overtime (driven by reduction of trainees, absence levels, etc), however this is offset by the underspend in Retained/Volunteer Duty System (RVDS) fees.
- Property costs (£0.760million underspend) due to reassessment of rates for masts and sale of Thornton site.
- Service & Supplies costs (£0.395million overspend) due to transition to WAN.
- Transport costs (£0.016million underspend) due to reduce travel levels.
- Income (£0.048million over recovered) due to grant income for electric cars charging points.

16.2 In regard to RVDS costs, JT advised the Board that this was reflective of the suspension of drill nights rather than a reduction in the overall activity levels.

16.3 In regard to Supplies and Services, JT informed the Board that the additional telephony costs for the transmission to an alternative supplier were anticipated. However, the timeline was underestimated and a subsequent debrief had been held to understand any lessons and future improvements.

16.4 The Board commented on the potential for future reports to be more succinct. However, the Board were reminded of their previous ask for more granular information to be presented to allow greater levels of scrutiny in this area. It was noted that this was still work in progress and further discussions would be arranged outwith the meeting.

16.5 **The Board scrutinised the resource budget position for the period ending 30 September 2021.**

17 RESOURCE BUDGET OUTTURN REPORT 2020/21

17.1 JT presented a report to the Board advising the final Resource Budget position for the financial year 2020/21, which shows an underspend of £2.339 million. The impact of the COVID-19 was felt across the Service and the financial implications of this are reflected in the final position.

17.2 Following budget revisions by Scottish Government, JT noted that adjustments to funding were made for Firelink, installation of interlinked smoke detectors, Fireworks and Make the Call campaigns and funds were returned by the Service to Scottish Government to support pressures in the wider public sector due to Covid-19.

17.3 **The Board scrutinised the Resource Budget Outturn Report 2020/21.**

18 CAPITAL BUDGET OUTTURN REPORT 2020/21

OFFICIAL

- 18.1 IM presented a report advising the Board of the final Capital Budget position for the financial year 2020/21, which was an underspend of £0.001 million. The breakdown of investment was included within the report. IM highlighted the following key areas:
- Challenges due to the global lockdown during this financial year.
 - Autumn Budget Review resulted in an additional £4.350 million which was used to target key areas such as dignified facilities on stations, carbon management plan (53 improvement project delivered), electrical vehicle charging system, ICT (provision of 750 laptops) and numerous minor works.
 - Clear demonstration of the flexibility and agility required to manage capital programme and meet the demands of the Service.
 - Conclusion of the Structural PPE roll out and replacement programme.
 - Continued investment in Lukas Battery Power Rescue Equipment noting that a specific report would be brought back to the Board in due course.

18.2 In regard to the Lukas Battery Power Rescue Equipment sets, IM advised the Board that these had been well received and were being widely used. The cognisance and investment to improve firefighter safety was appreciated by personnel.

18.3 The Board congratulated all those involved in achieving this excellent position, particularly during an unprecedented challenging year.

18.4 **The Board scrutinised the Capital Budget Outturn Report 2020/21.**

19 SFRS COVID COINS

19.1 MMcA presented a report to inform the Board of the intention to issue all SFRS employees, including those who retired during the pandemic, with a Covid 19 response challenge coin.

19.2 MMcA briefed the Board on the concept and thanked Marion Lang, Corporate Business and Administration Manager, for her work in developing and procuring the coins.

19.2 **The Board noted the report and supported the issuing of these coins**

20 RISK THEMES

20.1 In regard to the potential risk and uncertainty on the Service's ability to spend money, JT confirmed that this had already been identified in 2 areas (costs of construction and deliverability) and would be captured in the Strategic Risk Register.

20.2 There were no other new or emerging issues identified during this meeting.

21 FORWARD PLAN

21.1 The Forward Plan was noted and would be kept under review.

22 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

22.1 next formal meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on Thursday 16 December 2021 at 1000 hrs.

22.2 There being no further matters to discuss in public, the meeting closed at 1220 hours.

PRIVATE SESSION

23 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PRIVATE MEETING: THURSDAY 26 AUGUST 2021

23.1 The private minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

23.2 **The minutes of the private meetings held on 26 August 2021 were approved as a true record of the meeting.**

OFFICIAL

24 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

- 24.1 JT presented the Draft Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021 to the Board for approval. JT extended his thanks to staff and External Auditors involved in preparation of these documents during this particularly challenging year.
- 24.2 JT informed the Board that Deloitte (External Auditors) were still finalising the audit of the Annual Report and Accounts and appraised the Board of the 2 outstanding issues.
- 24.3 BB confirmed that the accounts had been presented at the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) meeting on 14 October 2021 and were recommended for approval, subject to outcomes of the outstanding issues.
- 24.4 **The Board approved the Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21, subject to the resolution of the issues outlined, and authorised the Chief Officer, as the Accountable Officer, to sign and submit this on behalf of the Service.**

There being no further matters to discuss in private, the meeting closed at 1315 hours