



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

PUBLIC MEETING – PEOPLE COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2021 @ 1300 HOURS

BY CONFERENCE FACILITIES

PRESENT:

Mhairi Wylie (Chair) (MW)
Malcolm Payton (MP)
Paul Stollard (PSt)

Steve Barron (Deputy Chair) (SBa)
Fiona Thorburn (FT)

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
Jim Holden (JH)	Deputy Head of Safety and Assurance
Kenneth Barbour (KB)	Head of Training Delivery and Performance
Ceri Dodd (CD)	Deputy Head of People and Organisational Development
Jason Sharp (JS)	Area Commander Workforce, Planning and Resourcing
Linda MacKenzie (LMack)	People and Organisational Development Manager (Item 9.1 only)
Mary Corry (MC)	Safety and Wellbeing Business Manager (Item 14.1 only)
Geri Thomson (GT)	Deputy Head of People and Organisational Development
Kirsty Darwent (KD)	Chair of SFRS Board
Alasdair Cameron (AC)	Group Commander, Board Support
Debbie Haddow (DH)	Board Support /Minutes

OBSERVERS:

None

1 WELCOME

- 1.1 In her new role as Committee Chair, MW opened the meeting and welcomed those present, in particular Steve Barron, Fiona Thorburn and Paul Stollard to their first meeting.
- 1.2 The Committee were reminded to raise their hands, in accordance with the remote meeting protocol, should they wish to ask a question.
- 1.3 On request, direct public access to observe meetings was now available, however, meetings would continue be recorded and published on the public website.

2 APOLOGIES

- 2.1 Karen Lockhart, Head of Safety and Assurance
Paul King, Head of Training and Employee Development
Julie Harkins, Acting Head of Safety and Assurance

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 verbal 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: 2 JUNE 2021

5.1 One minor typographical error was noted and amended.

5.2 **Subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2021 were approved as a true record of the meeting.**

5.3 Matters Arising

5.3.1 LBA provided clarity on the services provided by MidlandsHR and ongoing discussions regarding an extension to the existing contract.

6 ACTION LOG

6.1 There were no outstanding actions.

7 PERFORMANCE AND RISK REPORT QUARTER 1 2021/22

7.1 People and Organisational Development (POD)

7.1.1 SSe presented the Committee with the POD Progress and Performance Report Quarter 1 2021/22. The following key areas were highlighted:

- Format and content of report revised to align with the 8 performance indicators within the Performance Management Framework.
- Section 1 Strategic Resource Planning:
 - Target Operating Model (TOM) continues to be affected by Covid, However, the number of trainees undertaking the foundation training course was increasing. Potential to further increase trainee intake was being investigated by POD, Training and Service Delivery.
 - Retained and Volunteer Duty System (RVDS) vacancies remain high. The National Retained Volunteer Leadership Forum were focused on enhancing RVDS recruitment and selection processes.
 - Continued focus to improve the recruitment and selection practices to ensure that the entire process was as streamlined as possible.
- Within Section 2 Developing diverse workforce and inclusive culture:
 - Total number of grievances and discipline cases concluded within 6 weeks.
- Within Section 3 Strengthen our employee health, wellbeing and fitness arrangements:
 - Reporting an overall reduction in staff absences, due to a reduction in Operations Control (OC) absence levels. Absence rates within other staffing groups have increased.

7.1.2 The Committee requested clarification on how grievances/disciplinary cases connect with supporting a diverse workforce. LBA noted within grievance/disciplinary cases, issues of diversity may manifest themselves. Wider analysis, monitoring and reporting of equality and diversity measures were reported separately through various reports produced.

7.1.3 The Committee queried how the ongoing Covid restrictions were impacting on recruitment. In order to support recovery, SSe reminded the Committee that a significant number of additional posts were being recruited over and above normal practice. A working group has

OFFICIAL

been stood up to review the management and co-ordination of the recruitment processes. SSe outlined the potential challenges and additional vacancies that may arise from recruiting internally to these additional posts. SSe noted the potential challenges with external recruitment due to the current marketplace and advised that the Service was using recruitment frameworks where possible.

- 7.1.4 In regard to the OC staff absences, the Committee were reminded of the work undertaken to identify any trends/themes and, with the assistance of Lifelines Scotland, the Service had identified improvements within the support offered to this staffing group.
- 7.1.5 In line with the current restrictions on physical distance, the Committee were informed that the current projections for future trainee course intakes were 48 trainees per quarter.
- 7.1.6 In regard to Brexit, the Committee were informed that the Service had supported all individuals affected and there were no significant issues. SSe noted that following the launch of the new Agile Working Framework, potential recruitment from outwith the UK was being explored.
- 7.1.7 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

7.2 Training, Safety and Assurance

- 7.2.1 KB and JH jointly presented Training, Safety and Assurance Progress and Performance Quarter 1 Report 2021/22. KB highlighted the following key areas within the Training Function:
- Key successes include 32 RVDS trainees completing their initial training course (Task and Task Management), 51 RVDS trainees have completed their Breathing Apparatus and Fire Behaviour training, 34 Wholetime (WT) trainees completed and a further 47 WT trainees commenced (June 2021) the Foundation Training Programme.
 - Successful delivery of modular Incident Command Level 1 (ICL1) course on the islands.
 - Successful delivery of specialist rescue training in preparation for the Conference of Parties (COP) 26.
 - Risk levels remain stable.
 - Spotlight Report on ICL1 (acquisition) training. Due to restrictions, all courses have a reduced capacity which has led to the introduction of innovative methods of delivery. The benefits of the modularised ICL1 courses were noted.
 - Operational Core Competence continues to be managed between Training and Service Delivery. Due to Covid, some innovative solutions have been sought. Work continues to support and manage RVDS personnel through their maintenance programme.
 - Overall Incident Command Competence levels remain high and innovative solutions are in place to address the underreporting within the Flexi Duty Officer staffing group. This refresher training can now be fully delivered and assessed remotely.
- 7.2.2 The Committee welcomed the innovation and measures taken to ensure the continuation of training being delivered. With more training being delivered remotely, the Committee queried whether there were any short/medium term implications on the existing training centres. KB informed the Committee that the future delivery of training would be via a blended approach and this would increase the overall capacity to deliver training, ensure consistency in delivery and ultimately enhance Firefighter safety. JD reminded the Committee that the national training sites were primarily for the acquisition of training and as such they would always be required. JD further noted that the blended approach to training was the way forward and further work was ongoing to identify other innovative delivery methods.
- 7.2.3 The Committee commented on the potential risk to building strong relationships and loss of positive local ethos/culture due to training courses being delivered remotely. JD noted that the training element was only one part of the SFRS family culture and relationships were built across the Service daily. National training sites would continue to be used, as appropriate, particularly for acquisition of training, specialist training, etc. JD reminded the Committee

OFFICIAL

that the ability to deliver training remotely would benefit both the RVDS personnel and communities living on the islands.

- 7.2.4 JH highlighted the following key areas within the Safety and Assurance Function:
- Completion of 5 new management arrangements and supporting LCMS modules. Further 2 existing management arrangements reviewed.
 - Continued refinement of arrangements in relation to Covid with a view to assisting end users.
 - Continued influence and input into the Operation Document Conversion Project.
 - Improvement Plan 2021/22 agreed with all Directorates.
 - Improvement plan report providing comparison with the previous Q1 data and trend analysis over the last 3 years.
 - Improvement plan contains 89 actions with 21 specifically allocated within Quarter 1. Of these 21 actions, 10 actions had been completed and the remaining 11 were progressing well.
 - All key performance indicators were showing a downward trend, except for Acts of Violence.
 - Covid figures were now shown separately, with a positive downward trend as a result of the control measures put in place.
 - Reduction in Operational and Non-Operational Incident Injuries.
 - Developing Service Delivery Areas (SDA) and Training Handbooks to review generic risk assessments and safe systems of work for routine station/training activities.
 - Increased accidents/injuries within the North and East SDA and a notable reduction in the West SDA.
 - Common causation of accidents/injuries included manual handling/body movement, slips, trips and falls and hot/cold injuries.
 - Reduction in Near Miss reporting over the last 3 years. Health and Safety Briefing was being developed to raise awareness. Positive ratio increases of near miss reporting against RIDDOR reportable incidents.
 - Increased Acts of Violence incidents over the last 3 years. Good practices identified within some Local Senior Officers areas would be presented to the Safety and Assurance Sub Group with the proposal for dissemination throughout the Service.
 - Reduced Vehicle Accidents with the main causation being slow speed manoeuvres. Working Group has been convened to review and develop interactive case study/training.
- 7.2.5 The Committee commended the positive progress being made and the fullness of the report being presented. In regard to RIDDOR Reportable Injuries, the Committee noted that the infographic and narrative were not consistent.
- 7.2.6 The Committee noted that manual handling/body movement remained a common causation of accidents/injuries and enquired on the work being undertaken to address this. JH informed the Committee that the current manual handling training had been reviewed and would be rolled out across the Service. JH further noted that manual handling assessments would be considered during the procurement of new equipment and the Service Delivery Handbook would include an element of safe systems of work/training requirements. JD informed the Committee that the Musculoskeletal Group had been stood up to review and identify trends and mitigating actions.
- 7.2.7 In regard to Vehicle Accidents, the Committee asked for clarification on the current procedures/training, in particular the use of driving assistants. JD reminded the Committee that this was a long-standing issue, noted the various approaches adopted and that all accidents were investigated to identify cause/areas for improvement. JD and PS to discuss further outwith the meeting.

7.2.8 The Committee commended the report, however, noted that it was difficult to focus on key points due to the volume of information/ analysis being presented. JD offered to discuss the format, etc of the report further outwith the meeting with PSt due to his previous work in the health and safety arena.

7.2.9 The Committee thanked all those involved in the production of this report. The Committee acknowledged and appreciated the efforts and adaptations made during the challenging 18 months to ensure the Service continued to deliver services, training and safeguard personnel.

7.2.10 **The Committee scrutinised the report and thanked all those involved in its production.**

(L MacKenzie joined the meeting at 1400 hrs)

8 WORKPLACE CULTURE

8.1 Building the Future Together (BTF)

8.1.1 CD offered to deliver the concept overview of the BTF programme presentation to the new Committee members, which had been delivered to the previous members, at a separate session outwith this meeting. This Committee accepted this offer.

ACTION: BST

8.1.2 CD provided a brief overview of BTF programme concept noting the broad aims were focused on values, behaviours, skills and leadership as the Service continues to mature and to ensure the changing needs of the Service and local communities of Scotland are met.

8.1.3 **The Committee noted the verbal update and looked forward to the future information session being scheduled.**

9 EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

9.1 Covid-19 Recognition Scheme Review

9.1.1 LMack presented a report to the Committee providing an update on the review, and subsequent actions, of the Covid-19 Recognition Scheme in preparation for the launch of the main recognition scheme. The key points in relation to the recommendations were:

- Development of the communication strategy in partnership with Comms & engagement colleagues.
- Development of targeted comms to help address the imbalance of nominations between staffing groups.
- Develop supporting guidance for nominators.
- Consideration to be given to the frequency of scheme, ie bi-annual.
- Identification of key nomination themes etc ahead of the launch.

9.1.2 LMack advised the Committee that the People Board approved the recommendation and this would now be progressed.

9.1.3 **The Committee noted the report and commented on the importance of recognising the positive work undertaken by staff.**

9.2 Attendance Management Policy, Procedure and Management Handbook

9.2.1 The Attendance Management Policy, Procedure and Management Handbook report was presented to the Committee for information.

9.2.2 The Committee noted the revised Policy document and queried whether it had been necessary for the procedure and handbook to be presented to the Committee. LBa noted the comment.

9.2.3 The Committee requested clarification and assurance on how managers would progress individual cases through the absence capability process in the absence of a "single formula". LBa advised the Committee that circumstances differed from case to case and individual

managers would be aware of the specific case details as well as knowledge of the individual involved. Throughout the process individual managers would be supported and work alongside HR managers who would provide advice and ensure consistency was applied.

9.2.4 The Committee noted the report.

10 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

10.1 Learning Needs Analysis 2021-22

10.1.1 CD provided the Committee with a verbal update on the progress made since the previous meeting on the Service-wide Learning Needs Analysis (LNA) process for 2021-22. The following key points were noted:

- Proposals to realign annual and ongoing LNA process across the Service.
- Engaging with Heads of Functions to realign LNA to the business planning arrangements to work towards the ability to zero base budget for learning and development needs.
- Establishing learning partner arrangement to support and improve working relationships across the Service.
- Move towards a more responsive learning and development service delivery model to meet the changing needs of the Service.
- Early launch of LNA to prepare for early implementation in 2022/23.

10.1.2 The Committee noted the verbal update.

10.2 Leadership for Change Programme etc

10.2.1 CD presented a report to inform the Committee of the approved proposal to recommence the implementation of Leadership for Change Programme (LfCP) aligned to an updated virtual delivery plan. CD noted that the virtual roll out was scheduled for November 2021, however due to the recent rise in Covid levels and the precedence of maintaining an operational response, the implementation timescale would remain under review and adjusted if necessary.

10.2.2 The Committee commented on the 23-week programme timeline and queried whether this would benefit from being condensed. CD noted that the virtual delivery timescale had been developed to ensure flexibility, access and non-detrimental impact on operational response.

10.2.3 The Committee suggested that the inclusion of inspirational talks from guest speakers, from outwith the fire and rescue service, would enhance the programme. CD noted that a suite of inspirational leadership talks was available and that this programme formed part of the wider ongoing Middle Management Programme.

10.2.4 The Committee noted the report.

11 INDEPENDENT AUDIT/INSPECTION ACTION PLAN UPDATE

11.1 KB provided an update on the action plan to the Committee 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 were highlighted:

- Action plan contains 31 actions: 10 were currently being progressed, 5 deferred and 16 completed. Overall 79% completion.
- Two action due dates have been revised to October 2021, due to capacity/concurrency of events.

11.2 The Committee scrutinised the report and welcomed the progress being made.

12 UPDATE: WORKING TOGETHER FRAMEWORK

12.1 Update from Employee Partnership Forum (EPF)

12.1.1 LB advised that no further EPF meeting had taken place.

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

12.2 Update from Partnership Advisory Group (PAG)

12.2.1 LD advised that no further PAG meeting had taken place.

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

13 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

13.1 The Strategic Risk Register was presented to the Committee.

13.2 **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 for information. During Q1, three policies were published and a further two policies were issued for consultation during Q1. Additional information on Agile Working had been published on the iHub and drop in information sessions were scheduled. During Q2, six policies were issued for consultation and a further two policies were deferred to the next quarter. Several RDS policies have been prepared for consultation, however, these were subject to the outcomes of the Terms and Conditions ballot.

14.1.2 **The Committee noted the report.**

14.2 Committee Forward Plan Review

14.2.1 The Committee noted the Forward Plan.

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

14.3.1 There were no items identified.

14.3.2 The Committee requested that consideration be given for the undernoted items to be brought to a future Strategy Day, Committee meeting or development/orientation workshop. MW agreed to consider and identify the appropriate forum:

- RVDS Recruitment and Retention
- Identifying a strategy for creating a more Representative Workforce
- Graduate Recruitment Scheme

ACTION: MW/AC

15 REVIEW OF ACTIONS

15.1 AC confirmed there were 2 formal actions raised during the meeting.

16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

16.1 The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday 2 December 2021 at 1300 hrs.

16.2 There being no further matters to discuss, the public meeting closed at 1440 hrs.

PRIVATE SESSION

17 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PRIVATE MEETING: 2 JUNE 2021

17.1 The minutes of the private meeting held on 2 June 2021 were approved as a true record of the meeting.

18 REMUNERATION, APPOINTMENTS AND NOMINATIONS SUB COMMITTEE (RANSc) UPDATE

18.1 The draft minutes of the RANSc meeting on 2 June 2021 had been circulated to the Committee. The Committee noted the key issues discussed at the meeting of RANSc that was held earlier today (9 September 2021).

19 KEY CASE UPDATE 2021/22 – QUARTER 1

- 19.1 LBa provided a verbal update to the Committee on the Discipline, Grievance, Bullying and Harassment Statistics for Quarter 1 2021/22 and ongoing Employment Tribunals.