



SCOTTISH  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

**PUBLIC MEETING - SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE BOARD**

**THURSDAY 28 APRIL 2022 @ 1000 HRS**

**BY CONFERENCE FACILITIES**

**PRESENT:**

Kirsty Darwent, Chair (KD)  
Stuart Ballingall (SJB)  
Steve Barron (SB)  
Lesley Bloomer (LBI)  
Malcolm Payton (MP)  
Tim Wright (TW)

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

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Ross Haggart (RH)	Deputy Chief Officer
Liz Barnes (LBa)	Director of People and Organisational Development
John Dickie (JD)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Training, Safety and Assurance
Mark McAteer (MMcA)	Director of Strategic Planning, Performance and Communications
Stuart Stevens (SS)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Service Delivery
Paul Stewart (PS)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Service Development
John Thomson (JT)	Acting Director of Finance and Procurement
Sandra Fox (SF)	Head of ICT (Item 15)
Alasdair Cameron (AC)	Group Commander Board Support
Heather Greig (HG)	Executive Officer Board Support
Debbie Haddow (DJH)	Board Support/Minutes

**OBSERVERS:**

Desmond Donnelly, Group Commander Business Support  
Robert Scott, HMFSI Chief Inspector

**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 Martin Blunden, Chief Officer  
Iain Morris, Acting Director of Asset Management

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- 3**            **CONSIDERATION OF AND DECISION ON ANY ITEMS TO BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE**  
3.1           The Board agreed that the Strategic Plan 2022-25 For Consultation, Service Delivery Model Programme (SDMP) Outline Options for Change, Command and Control Futures (CCF) Periodic Update and Delegated Authority would be taken in private due to the confidential nature of the issues and confidential commercial and financial information (Standing Order 9G and 9E).

- 4**            **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**  
4.1           There were no declarations of conflict of interests made.

- 5**            **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:**  
**Thursday 31 March 2022**  
5.1           The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.  
5.2           **The minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2022 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 noting the impact assessment provided for decisions made 12 months ago.  
7.2           **Members noted the updated Decision Log.**

- 8**            **CHAIR'S REPORT**  
8.1           The Chair presented the Chair's Update report noting events which had occurred since the Board meeting held on 31 March 2022. In addition to the written report, the Chair provided a verbal update on the following key areas:  
• Attendance at Trainee Firefighter Graduation Ceremonies.  
8.2           The Board commented on the importance of the graduation ceremonies and noted the ongoing restrictions on attendees. Consideration would be given to allow Board members to attend virtually.

**ACTION: RH**

- 8.3           **The Board noted the report and verbal update.**

- 9**            **DEPUTY CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT**  
9.1           The Deputy Chief Officer presented the report noting events which had occurred since the Board meeting held on 31 March 2022.

- 9.2           The Board requested a brief update on the Reform Collaboration Group (RCG). It was noted that Police Scotland's 2-year tenure as Chair was due to conclude and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) would take over this role in May 2022. Going forward there would be a joint secretariat between Police Scotland and SFRS which would improve the co-ordination of the meetings. The next meeting of the RCG was scheduled for Friday 6 May 2022 and an update would be brought back to the next Board meeting. Briefing paper to be provided outlining the strategic intent for future years and clear links to Strategic Plans and the RCG programme of work.

**ACTION: MMcA**

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- 9.3 RH reminded the Board that the Blue Light Collaboration Board, which reported into the RCG, had identified 9 different workstreams for potential collaborative opportunities.
- 9.4 MMcA noted that a report on Partnership Working would be brought to a future Board meeting.

9.5 **The Board noted the report and verbal update.**

### 10 COMMITTEE UPDATES

#### 10.1 People Committee (PC)

- 10.1.1 MW reminded the Board of the workshops held/scheduled to discuss the wider assurance reporting, agree a consistent opinion and hold collaborative discussions with Executives.

### 11 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW OF BOARD AND COMMITTEE RELATED ITEMS

11.1 MMcA presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the Annual Governance Review of Board and Committee related items for thereby ensuring the continued effectiveness of the governance arrangements within the SFRS. The following key points were highlighted:

- Summary of all amendments listed within Appendix A.
- No revisions were made to the Standing Orders.
- Revisions to the Scheme of Delegations included clarification of responsibilities of the Board, Chair and Chief Officer (section 2), delegated authority (section 4) and delegation to Chief Officer (Section 6).
- Revisions to the Members Code of Conduct due to the publication of a revised Model Code of Conduct by Scottish Government (SG). No deviation from the Model Code of Conduct was permitted without the consent of SG.
- Revisions to Committee structures with Board Members Malcolm Payton and Paul Stollard transferring to the Audit and Risk Assurance and Service Delivery Committees, respectively.
- Revision to the Corporate Report Template to provide further clarity on classification and simplified template.
- Revisions to the Committee's Terms of Reference.
- Revision to the Equality Impact Assessment, subject to approval of the Good Governance Framework (item 12).

11.2 The Board asked how any delegated authority would be tracked/audited. MMcA noted that, in exceptional circumstances, the Chair would delegate authority and then retrospectively seek approval at the next formal Board meeting. MMcA to give consideration for a standard template to be developed to record delegated authority.

11.3 Future Board Strategy Day session to be scheduled to allow further discussions on the Model Code of Conduct and the Board's responsibilities.

**ACTION: MMcA**

11.4 With regard to the Corporate Report Template, MMcA advised the Board that the key strategic implications would now be incorporated within the main body of the report, assistance would be provided to report authors to ensure that sufficient information was being provided to allow appropriate scrutiny.

11.5 The Board noted the Executive and Board scrutiny guidance table, commented on the differences between the type of scrutiny applied, suggested further amendments and proposed that a future strategy day session be scheduled to consider scrutiny roles/responsibilities and identify further improvement.

**ACTION: MMcA**

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- 11.6 Consideration to be given to the following suggested amendments:
- Standing Orders, Urgent Issues (para 55) “...*the Chief Officer may take reasonable and appropriate action, in relation to any function not delegated to that role, ...*”. Consideration to be given to contextualise by including the term operational matters.
  - Scheme of Delegations Section 4.3 to be renamed Chief Officer Unplanned Absence
  - Scheme of Delegations Section 6.7 Consultation, consideration to be given to include reference to the procurement guidance and the impact of other risks ie reputational.
  - Corporate Report Template, Scrutiny guidance table to be amended to change the word reassurance to assurance (Who), inclusion of “Are the risks inherent in the proposal consistent with the Board’s risk appetite?” (What), change of wording from “*what additional support ..*” to “How can we support and provide constructive challenge ..” (How). Also, the text within the paragraph prior to the table “*The table below clarifies the types of scrutiny that will be applied ..*” to be amended to “*the table below clarifies the type of questions likely to arise ...*”.

**ACTION: MMcA**

- 11.7 **The Board approved the suite of papers, subject to the additional amendments to Scheme of Delegations and Corporate report template and the acknowledgement of continuous improvement over the coming months.**

*(NB Due to technical issues during this item, the discussions were briefly suspended at 1032 hrs and resumed at 1034 hrs)*

## 12 GOOD GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

- 12.1 MMcA presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the Good Governance Framework to encourage better service delivery and improved accountability of good governance in the SFRS. The following key points were highlighted:
- Collation of key governance documents and arrangements into a single framework.
  - Simplified, clearer and easier to understand governance across the Service.
  - Proposal for the Integrated assurance to be developed.
  - Framework would remain a living document and be subject to continuous improvement.
  - Key focus on roles and responsibilities across the Service, subject to future detailed discussions.
  - Adopted and adapted the principles from the Good Governance Standard for Public Services (Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy).
- 12.2 The Board welcomed the comprehensive framework and queried the preferred frequency of the Committee assurance statements. MMcA noted that the Committee assurance statements would remain on an annual basis, however, regular updates would continue to be provided at Board meetings. Continued work through 2022/23 will develop a structured format, without being overly prescriptive, for regular reporting.
- 12.3 The Board commented on principles of good corporate governance, noting that these could be considered actions/commitments rather than principles. MMcA reminded the Board that the framework was based on how CIPFA present their principles and the Service have not varied from this standard. MMcA noted the comments and reiterated that this framework was a living document and would be subject continuous improvement.
- 12.4 MMcA informed the Board that the timescale for the assurance plan initiative had still to be defined.

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- 12.5 The Board noted that the simplification the framework provided was the collation of governance documentation and readability. The Board complimented the efforts made to develop this framework. The Board further noted the ongoing potential for future refinements/improvements to be made.
- 12.6 The Board commented on the placement of the Annual Review and Reporting section within the framework and whether this was appropriate.
- 12.7 Brief discussion took place on the contents of the framework, statement of principles, assurance statements and opportunities for future refinement/improvement.

12.8 **The Board approved the Good Governance Framework.**

*(NB Due to technical issues during this item, the discussions were briefly suspended at 1125 hrs and resumed at 1127 hrs)*

### 13 ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN 2022/23

13.1 MMcA presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the Annual Operating Plan (AOP) 2022/23. The following key points were highlighted:

- Governance and Accountability Framework specifies that the AOP should link to the delivery (key actions) of the Strategic Plan. The business as usual aspects of the Strategic Plan are captured through the performance management framework and reported through KPI's, risk and performance reports.
- Actions within the AOP were built up over a 3-year period and a programme of work to deliver the Strategic Plan was developed.
- AOP is aligned to the Strategic Plan 2019-22 and will cover the period to September 2022. A new Strategic Plan 2022-25 would be developed and published in October 2022 and a new AOP would then be developed and aligned.

13.2 The Board asked whether the intention was to have one plan which captured the change elements, interdependencies, etc. MMcA informed the Board that the SLT had agreed and committed to include the change elements into the AOP going forward and to provide a fuller overview for the Board.

13.3 MMcA advised the Board that further discussions will be held over the coming months, with the intention to engage and seek feedback from the Board.

13.4 The Board approved the Annual Operating Plan and acknowledged that further work would be carried out over the coming months.

13.5 **The Board approved the Annual Operating Plan 2022/23.**

*(NB Due to technical issues, the meeting broke at 1142 hrs and reconvened at 1150 hrs)*

### 14 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2022/24

14.1 BB presented a report to the Board to advise and seek approval of the Internal Audit activity planned for 2022/24. The following key points were highlighted:

- Presented to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on 30 March 2022 and recommended for Board approval.
- Development of the plan was a collaborative process between the Executives and Azets.
- Two year plan which could flex, if necessary.

14.2 The Board asked whether there was any particular issues or concerns that influenced the proposed audits. BB noted that no high-risk areas were identified during the

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development process. The plan was developed to focus audit attention on areas which would add the most value as opposed to providing assurance of compliance.

14.3 **The Board approved the Internal Audit Plan 2022/24.**

### 15 **DIGITAL STRATEGY 2022-25**

15.1 PS presented a report, which included the Equality Impact Assessment, to the Board seeking approval of the SFRS Digital Strategy 2022 – 2025. SF confirmed that the EIA had been completed and has resulted in no amendments being required to the strategy.

15.2 The Board noted the scrutiny undertaken at the previous meeting.

15.3 **The Board approved the SFRS Digital Strategy 2022-25.**

### 16 **STANDING ORDERS FOR THE REGULATION OF CONTRACTS**

16.1 JT presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the revised Standing Orders for Regulation of Contracts. The following key points were highlighted:

- Governance arrangements in relation to procurement activity which are in line with the legislation and Scottish Government's guidance.
- All SFRS staff who are involved in procurement activities are required to adhere to the Standing Orders.
- Standing Orders have been updated to reflect latest legislation/guidance and further devolve the procurement process within the Service which will enable, streamline and be more effective.
- Due to EU exit, financial thresholds are now determined by the World Trade Organisation.
- Amendments to the internal processes include the Innovation Partnership Procedures, works contracts (covered by Scottish Government's construction manual) and quick quotes process and devolved authority to award contracts.

16.2 The Board sought clarification whether the delegated limits had been amended and whether the appropriate controls were in place for any new arrangements. JT confirmed that delegated limits had changed. JT advised that previously only the Chief Officer and Director/Head of Financial Services could authorise contracts and this additional devolvement would enable and streamline processes. In terms of control/risk, as part of the audit trail and processes, there was sufficient segregation of duties between individuals and any conflicts of interests are captured.

16.3 JT noted that the Standing Orders covered the procurement authority with the recognition of other required authorities, ie financial, etc across the organisation. JT further noted that there were sufficient measures in place, such as the business case, stakeholder involvement and appropriate authorisation prior to the procurement of goods/services.

16.4 JT noted that the procurement specialists would work with and advise Directorates, through the User Intelligence Group, to identify the requirement and what was trying to be achieved in terms of service provision. The procurement specialists would sign off contract awards to ensure appropriate evidence, controls and governance.

16.5 The Board commented on the potential lack of awareness of the broader governance environment if this was taken in isolation. JT noted the value of the cross reference, however, the Service had to take cognisance of Scottish Government's guidance and changes to thresholds. JT noted that the document, although separate, was linked.

16.6 **The Board approved the Standing Orders for the Regulation of Contracts.**

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### **17 REPORTS FOR INFORMATION ONLY:**

#### **17.1 SFRS Safety and Assurance Strategy**

17.1.1 JD presented the report to the Board which provided an overview of the SFRS Safety and Assurance Strategy for information.

17.1.2 JD advised the Board that the 5-year Safety and Assurance Strategy had been developed and aligned with the 5-year Training Strategy.

17.1.3 **This report was presented for information only.**

#### **17.2 UK Fire Standards**

17.2.1 RH presented the report to the Board which informed the current position in relation to recently published UK fire standards for information.

17.2.2 The Board asked how many actions arising from the standards would be identified and addressed. RH advised that the Service had carried out self-assessments and no gaps had been identified. RH noted the potential for the HMFSI to use these standards to benchmark against other UK fire and rescue services. Consideration to be given on future reporting to the Service Delivery Committee, if appropriate.

17.2.3 **This report was presented for information only.**

### **18 RISK THEMES**

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

### **19 FORWARD PLAN**

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

### **20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

20.1 The next formal meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on Thursday 30 June 2022 at 1000 hrs.

20.2 There being no further matters to discuss in public, the meeting closed at 1215 hours.

## **PRIVATE SESSION**

### **21 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PRIVATE MEETING: THURSDAY 31 MARCH 2022**

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

### **22 PRIVATE ACTION LOG**

22.1 The Board considered the private action log noting the updates and agreed the removal of completed actions.

### **23 STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-25 FOR CONSULTATION**

23.1 MMcA presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the Draft Strategic Plan 2022-25 for its release for public consultation.

23.2 **The Board approved the Strategic Plan, subject to the amendments noted and final circulation, for public consultation.**

### **24 SDMP OUTLINE OPTIONS FOR CHANGE**

24.1 PS presented a report to the Board providing an update on the development phase of the SDMP.

24.2 **The Board scrutinised the report.**

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*(The meeting broke at 1505 hrs and reconvened at 1535 hrs)*

**25 COMMAND AND CONTROL FUTURES PROJECT PERIODIC REVIEW**

25.1 JD presented a report to the Board providing an overview of the current status of project delivery, supplier management and the scrutiny provided by key stakeholders, including the Digital Assurance Office (DAO) on behalf of the Scottish Government (SG).

25.2 **The Board noted the report.**

**26 DELEGATED AUTHORITY**

26.1 Following the earlier approval of the revised Scheme of Delegations, KD sought the approval of the Board to enact the power to delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Officer, in the absence on the Chief Officer.

26.2 **The Board approved the enactment of Scheme of Delegations to delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Officer in the absence of the Chief Officer.**

On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked ACO John Dickie and ACO Paul Stewart for their hard work, contributions and dedication throughout their service and wished them well in their imminent retirement.