



SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

**MEETING: STAFFING GROUP:
THURSDAY 2 APRIL 2015
PERTH FIRE STATION**

PRESENT

Bill McQueen (*Chair/Board member*); Kirsty Darwent (*Board Member*); Marieke Dwarshuis (*Board Member*); Peter Heath (*Head of HR*); Fiona McOmish (*POD Manager/Employee Relations-Policy Development*); Robin Iffla (*Board Member*); Karen Lockhart (*Head/Health, Safety, Wellbeing*); Fiona McOmish (*People & Organisational Development*); Martin Togneri (*Board Member*); Diane Vincent (*Director/People & Organisational Development*); Iain Vincent (*POD – part meeting*); Gill Cochrane (*Notes*)

1. WELCOME / OPENING REMARKS

Bill McQueen welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

- Pat Watters, Chair / SFRS Board

3. DRAFT MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 15 JANUARY 2015

These were accepted as an accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

(i) *Item 7 – POD Items: Interim Workforce Plan*

Marieke Dwarshuis sought clarification of the position in regard to Watch Managers A & B, and whether or not the issues had been resolved. Diane Vincent advised that discussion was ongoing with the Trade Union, and the Policy was being addressed by Fiona McOmish. Peter Heath advised that those who had been temporarily promoted to WMB had been advised that they would now revert to WMA.

(ii) *Action Log*

Members considered the Action Log which would be updated accordingly.

Item 5: 15 January 2015: Policies and Procedures: Managing Attendance

Bill McQueen sought clarification of this issue which related to the position regarding the Board's Appeal Panel having access to medical records in the event of an appeal against dismissal. Peter Heath commented that it would be necessary to seek the permission of the relevant individual appellant before such access could be granted. It was noted that refusal could lead to a delay in the appeal process, and could have implications for the outcome of the hearing.

It was agreed that it would be useful for the position to be clarified within the Policy, and to ensure that individual appellants and their Trade Union

representative were fully appraised of any possible implications of refusal.

ACTION: Fiona McOmish

Item 7(a): 15 January 2015: Interim Workforce Plan

Diane Vincent advised that this item had been removed from today's agenda due to other business. The revised Agenda provided a flavour of POD Directorate business with a view to discussing the format of future meetings of the Staffing Governance Committee (rather than the Staffing Group). It was noted that:

- The Workforce Plan had been tabled at the January meeting but could be revisited if necessary at a future meeting;
- A review of the Workforce Plan, which takes the Service through to 2016, is likely to commence in the autumn this year; it is aligned to the critical savings pathway presented to Audit Scotland in December and, as the service moves into the next budget round for 2016/17, the Workforce Plan would be revisited at that time
- The work being done by Robert Scott and Mark McAteer on SFRS Strategic Plan would influence the shape of the Workforce Plan in going forward;
- In order to maintain an overview of workforce planning, a Forum had been established, chaired by Peter Heath, and would meet on a 6-weekly basis.

Item 8.(ii): 9 October 2014: Recruitment and Selection Policy/Handbook

Peter Heath advised that this had been updated and published.

Item 8.(iii): 9 October 2014: Retention Principles

Diane Vincent referred to concerns previously raised by Board Member Michael Foxley regarding retention of staff, particularly within Control Rooms in the North, when he had sought clarification of SFRS policy on 'incentivising' retention. Although she advised him that the Staffing Group had considered this to be unnecessary, he asked for the issue to be fed through the service transformation programme.

During discussion, it was noted that:

- There was some confusion around what constituted incentivisation, and what are reasonable arrangements to make to retain people;
- If reasonable adjustments were required to allow people to continue in their roles, this must be tailored to individual needs;
- 'Incentives' were considered to mean enhancing salary levels to ensure that staff remained in situ for a specific time; as a result of Voluntary Severance, such arrangements were already in place.

Diane advised that, following the departure of Marion Nicholson, Fiona McOmish would assume responsibility for the Change Management Team, and it was proposed that she would prepare a Briefing Note revisiting incentive arrangements.

It was understood that SFRS was already operating a Board-approved Policy, and if any variation was required in order to treat individuals differently, this would require further authorisation of the Board.

ACTION: Fiona McOmish to revisit the Aberdeen and Inverness Control arrangements

Item 8.(iv): 9 October 2014: Mobility Principles

Peter Heath had met with the FBU regarding interim mobility to achieve movement of uniformed staff across legacy boundaries. There had been some progress and a

further meeting would take place with the FBU on 24 April by which time consideration would have been given to travel time, and the inclusion of Control. It was hoped to agree a form of words at that meeting, prior to submitting to their Regional Committee meeting on 30 April. Consideration would also be given to Terms and Conditions for uniformed staff, and this would include mobility.

Reflection on Employee Partnership Forum Matters to be Carried Forward

Fiona McOmish commented that a Communication Strategy and Implementation Plan was drawn-up based on the commitment to the Working Together Framework, to consider how the organisation and the Trade Unions would embed the framework. Although it had already been adopted with a number of successful practices, it was intended to embed it at employee level, and an Action Plan would be further developed in liaison with the Trade Unions. A meeting was scheduled to take place prior to the Employee Partnership Forum on 30 April for this purpose.

5. REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

Bill McQueen invited Diane Vincent to introduce the document on terms of Reference and to identify the purpose of the Staffing Governance Group.

Diane gave an overview of the POD Directorate highlighting that:

- Following recent structural changes, the Directorate now had three distinct function leads, ie HR/OD led by DACO Peter Heath (approx. 40 staff including Admin); Health, Safety and Wellbeing led by Karen Lockhart (approx. 40 staff); and Training & Employee Development (TED) led by DACO Iain Vincent (approx. 200 staff / geographically spread);
- The work of the Directorate is coordinated within the POD Strategy approved by SFRS Board last year and was not affected by structural changes;
- A review of the distribution of resources was being undertaken.

Diane explained that:

- In the first two years of SFRS, the focus of the Staffing Group had been on HR issues, eg structures, people-related policies/procedures etc;
- Now in year 3 of SFRS, strategies were in place and the structure was more settled with a return to business-as-usual activity;
- Transformation work was still required and the Directorate team of four would focus on POD strategy, objectives for managing its business, including performance reporting, whilst continuing to deliver against functional objectives.

That was the background against which consideration should be given to the purpose of the Staffing Governance Committee, with greater emphasis on the three distinct functions within the Directorate.

At the end of last year, the specific Staffing Group Terms of Reference were revised and agreed. It had been decided that:

- Specific Board members would service both the Employee Partnership Forum (EPF) and the Staffing Group, with meetings held on the same day;
- Specific consultation issues would be the business of the EPF, whilst the Staffing Group would address private business such as pay issues or complex disciplinary/grievance cases;
- Much of the general business of the Staffing Group moved to the EPF Terms of Reference, whilst the Staffing Group Terms of Reference were adapted to focus more on it being a Remuneration Committee;

- Following an evaluation of Board business and governance arrangements, the Terms of Reference would now be reviewed to reflect strategic business needs.

During discussion, Board Members raised the following in relation to the Employee Partnership Forum and the Staffing Governance Committee:

- It was necessary to clarify the type of issues to be considered in each forum, eg workforce planning, performance, how frameworks are implemented, equal pay and equality issues, engagement/consultation with staff, HSW reporting, themes emerging and appropriate action to be taken, high level issues that might require to be referred to SFRS Board, themes/specific details of discipline cases, tactics around negotiation;
- Whether or not the Staffing Governance Committee would be a public meeting with confidential/tactical information considered in private by exception;
- What value might be added through debate of issues by the Staffing Governance Committee and how it might benefit the POD team; whether some issues might require to be referred to the full Board; the need to avoid duplication of the Employee Partnership Forum Agenda;
- The compilation of each group required review, eg EPF is a consultative forum for senior members of staff and senior Trade Union members; the role of the EPF could be enhanced in terms of consultation and engagement;
- Division of work between the Staffing Governance Committee and Employee Partnership Forum, with clear identification that both bodies do different things;
- The role of performance scrutiny should lie with the Staffing Governance Committee, with the EPF having a more consultative role;
- In what capacity Board members would participate in each group – as members or ‘in attendance’;
- The future status of the EPF which is currently identified as a Committee of the Board in the Scheme of Delegation; Bill McQueen and Kirsty Darwent meeting to consider the Scheme of Delegation;
- In relation to decision-making and scrutiny, Committees should not have governance members who are not Board members;
- SFRS Board did not have space or time to scrutinise all the operations of the service and should be confident that its Committees, eg the Staffing Governance Committee, were testing and reflecting on relevant issues;
- The performance appraisal of the Chief Officer and Senior Leadership Team could be a role for a small sub Committee of the Staffing Governance Committee.

Diane Vincent advised that, currently, the Chief Officer holds regular 1-to-1 meetings with Directors in terms of assessing/appraising performance.

She concurred with the views expressed in terms of the relationship between EPF and the Staffing Governance Committee, and acknowledged that duplication of the agenda had been an issue as yet unresolved. She agreed that not all 5 board members required to attend meetings of the EPF and suggested that the Chair of this group (Bill McQueen), could be the link between the two forums, supported by two other Board members, eg the Equalities Champion (Robin Iffla), and the Chair of the Board.

Reflecting on the process for initiation and development of policies, Diane outlined a proposal for dealing with business in future, ie that policy principles could be

considered and agreed by the Staffing Governance Committee, and subsequently submitted to the Employee Partnership Forum for consultation purposes. Any contentious issues arising would be brought back to this forum. If none, a policy would be developed for consultation with the Trade Unions. The policy would then either be taken forward to the SLT and/or Board for approval or, if authority delegated to this forum, it would come back here for final sign off. The Staffing Governance Group would hold POD to account, through the framework, on the performance of that policy.

In light of today's discussion, Diane would consider the forward business plan in liaison with the Directorate, SLT colleagues and the Chief Officer.

It was agreed that:

- **In light of discussion, the Forward Business Plan would be further considered by the Directorate, SLT colleagues and the Chief Officer;**
- **The Staffing Group Terms of Reference would be revised to reflect discussion with a view to greater emphasis on strategic consideration of policies and scrutiny;**
- **Consideration to be given to identifying sub sets of this Forum to address pay and reward issues, appeal against dismissal; as well as performance appraisal of the Strategic Leadership Team.**

ACTION: DIANE VINCENT

6. POD OPERATING PLAN

(i) *Overview of POD Strategy Performance Reporting Arrangements and Review of 2014-15 Q3 Reports*

(ii) *Overview of 2015-16 POD Annual Operating Plan*

Diane Vincent advised that a draft 2015-16 Annual Operating Plan was provided for information. It was intended that, following discussion today, the documents would be revisited in terms of business for the Staffing Governance Group. Work was ongoing in liaison with Stewart Ross to streamline the reporting process and feedback would be provided on key measures required by this forum.

(iii) *Overview of 2015-16 POD Forward Reporting Plan*

Bill McQueen suggested that consideration required to be given to which of items would achieve useful input from Board members and which might require Board approval, and he highlighted the need to identify priorities.

Board members highlighted the following:

- Discussion was welcomed in regard to items on which this forum would wish to see performance reported;
- Work was being progressed in terms of performance data and management commentary on performance was an important aspect of reporting;
- It would be helpful to have analysis of themes that have emerged in the recent quarter whilst reflecting on previous themes; at this juncture, the level of written information was helpful;
- There appeared to be difficulty in delivery of some aspects of Health & Safety training in the North SDA;

Diane Vincent advised that, whilst a review of performance reporting was scheduled to be undertaken, much work had been done to standardise training Policy and programmes, and it was anticipated this would be finalised in the next

12 months. Currently, reporting was under legacy arrangements, with information extracted from eight different training systems.

- There appeared to be some cultural issues in relation to routine medicals and fitness;

Karen Lockhart advised that some services were still outsourced with little subsequent scrutiny. However, contract management arrangements had been introduced, along with a structured plan to ensure that outsourced services meet SFRS requirements.

It was agreed that:

- **Further discussion should take place in regard to performance data priorities; ACTION: ALL**
- **There was a need for management commentary to accompany performance reports; KAREN LOCKHART/PETER HEATH/IAIN VINCENT**
- **Consideration should be given to external comparators, eg Fire and Rescue Services and/or other organisations, eg Police Scotland data. KAREN LOCKHART/PETER HEATH/IAIN VINCENT**

7. PAY AND REWARD UPDATE

Deferred to the next meeting.

8. CULTURAL AUDIT PLAN and POSITIVE ACTION REVIEW ACTION PLANS

It was noted that, since the previous update of two weeks ago, there was nothing new to report.

9. FIREFIGHTERS FITNESS WORKING GROUP

Diane Vincent advised that a Firefighter Fitness Working Group had been established, linked to the Firefighter safety project. Much of the work had been done under the best value review of Occupational Health to facilitate and support improvements in firefighter fitness testing regimes. By the end of Q1, 100% of wholetime and RDS would have been completed.

Karen Lockhart gave an overview of Bath University research in relation to amending firefighter fitness standards, and guidance from CFOA on how to implement.

Diane Vincent advised that the next step was to enter into consultation with the Trade Union on the basis of moving to the new standard.

Members noted that the work was ongoing, that there were potential issues of contention due to the proposed revision in standards, and that update reports would be brought forward as appropriate.

10. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED TED OPERATING MODEL

Diane Vincent commented that Training was previously structured in terms of three Service Delivery Areas, SFRS College at Gullane, and a central training team. However, with the move to one Service Delivery Area, the closure of Gullane, and the introduction of a single Head of Training, changes would be made to the operating model in moving to the approved revised structure.

Diane referred to a diagram for illustrative purposes, and outlined the type of framework envisaged. She suggested that it might be helpful to bring forward a more detailed presentation on operational Training to clarify the context.

11. CHANGE MANAGEMENT UPDATE: SUMMARY OF 2014/15 VS/ER APPLICATIONS and INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

Diane Vincent drew attention to the Internal Audit report which would be considered by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

Members noted the report with approval.

12. FUTURE STANDING AGENDA

The POD Management Team to consider and bring forward proposals.

13. AOCB

None.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that this was the final meeting of the Staffing Group, and dates would now be CANCELLED

In future, there would be meetings of STAFFING GOVERNANCE – a Committee of SFRS Board. The Staffing Governance Committee would meet as follows:

Tuesdays @ 1:30pm in the ground floor meeting room at Perth fire station

- 23 June
- 22 September
- 22 December
- 22 March 2016