



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

PUBLIC MEETING – STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 3 DECEMBER 2020 @ 1300 HOURS

BY CONFERENCE FACILITIES

PRESENT:

Primrose Stark (Chair) (PS)
Bill McQueen (BMcQ)

Anne Buchanan (Deputy Chair) (AB)
Malcolm Payton (MP)

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
Ceri Dodd (CD)	Deputy Head of People and Organisational Development
Geri Thomson (GT)	Deputy Head of People and Organisational Development
Rachael Scott (RS)	Deputy Head of People and Organisational Development
George Lindsay (GL)	HR Advisor (Item 9.1 Only)
Julie Harkins (JH)	Health and Safety Manager
Mary Corry (MC)	People and Organisational Development Business Manager
Alasdair Cameron (AC)	Group Commander, Board Support
Heather Greig (HG)	Executive Officer Board Support
Debbie Haddow (DH)	Board Support/Minutes

OBSERVERS:

Brian Baverstock, Board Member
Fiona Thorburn, Board Member

1 WELCOME

1.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed those present, in particular observing Board Members Fiona Thorburn and Brian Baverstock.

2 APOLOGIES

2.1 Kirsty Darwent, Chair of SFRS Board
Richard Whetton, Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance
Fiona Munro, Head of People and Organisational Development
Karen Lockhart, Head of Safety and Assurance
Paul King, Deputy Assistant Chief Officer Training and Employee Development

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 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.

(L Barnes left the meeting at 1305 hrs)

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 10 SEPTEMBER 2020

5.1 The following amendments were noted and agreed:

Karen Lockhart's role amended to *Head of Safety and Assurance*.

Paragraph 7.1.7 to be amended to read *"..recruitment health assessments to recommence.."* instead of *"..routine health assessments to recommence.."*.

All items taken in private at the previous meeting to be added under *Consideration and Decision of Any Items to be taken in Private* noting the reasons for same.

5.2 **Subject to the above amendments, the minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2020 were approved as a true record of the meeting.**

5.3 Matters Arising

5.3.1 None

6 ACTION LOG

6.1 There were no outstanding open actions to report.

7 PERFORMANCE AND RISK REPORT QUARTER 2 2020/21

7.1 People and Organisational Development (POD)

7.1.1 SSe presented the Committee with the POD Progress and Performance Report Quarter 2 2020/21, noting the references to work planned in Quarters 3/4 were subject to change due to reprioritisation of Directorate workloads.

The following key areas were highlighted:

- Rescheduled Resolution Advisory Panel (RAP) meeting in respect of Retained Duty System (RDS) Terms and Conditions (T&Cs) to be held in Quarter 3.
- Negotiations concluded in regard to standardisation of Instructors T&Cs with full and final offer issued.
- Increased Cycle to Work Scheme spend limit.
- COVID-19 Employee Recognition process launched to recognise individuals/teams during this period.
- Building the Future Together programme initial work commenced.
- To meet both legal and moral obligations the "We are Positive About Disability Guide to Reasonable Adjustment" has been established.
- Review of Integrity at Work Policy being undertaken.
- Talent management and development online leadership development sessions delivered, Leadership Development Centres for middle managers established and skills bank survey launched.
- Update with People, Training, Finance and Assets project, in particular engagement (in-house), development of communication plan and appointment of a project manager.

OFFICIAL

- Update with the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme project noting previous significant delays and current progress.
- Delay to the review and relaunch of Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment process.
- POD Progress and Risk Table including movement of risks.
- Continue to promote Leavers questionnaire, however returns remain low.
- Continuation of recruitment at a reduced capacity due to the impact of COVID-19.
- Benefits of electronic medical records and the positive impact on support provided by the health and safety team.
- Safe system of work/risk assessments in place for carrying out health and wellbeing assessments and routine fitness assessments.
- Musculoskeletal Reduction and Injury Group terms of reference and initial action plan agreed at the National Safety and Assurance Board. Increase in referrals for psychological reasons.
- Wellbeing Group continue to meet to support staff and it is intended that a pulse survey will be issued to gain feedback.
- Mental Health Strategy progressing, in particular the approach to suicide prevention and providing appropriate training.

(B McQueen joined the meeting at 1315 hrs)

- 7.1.2 SSe confirmed that the PVG checks were being undertaken on current and new employees and there were no significant issues to date. It was anticipated that the programme, which was approximately 50% complete, would take up to a further 12 months to finalise. GT commented on the potential issues that may arise and that individual cases would be reviewed as necessary. Due to the significant risk, the Committee requested further coherent information on any potential issues of concern and how these would be addressed. GT confirmed that the Discipline Policy and Employment & Criminal Conviction Policy had been revised and therefore processes were in place. She further commented on the automatic process in place with Disclosure Scotland to highlight any potential issues.
- 7.1.3 As Chair of the Employee Partnership Forum (EPF), AB noted their recent discussions regarding recommencement of health and safety assessments, liability in relation to non-disclosure of pre-existing health conditions and the proactive work within the mental health/suicide prevention areas.
- 7.1.4 In relation to the negotiations of Instructors Terms and Conditions, the Committee were informed that the full and final offer was rejected by the FBU and the future options available to the Service.
- 7.1.5 In relation to the recommencement of health and wellbeing activities, GT outlined the impact on such activities from COVID-19 and the subsequent measures put in place. It was noted that the Risk Assessment and Safe Systems of Work were live documents therefore were continually reviewed/revised to ensure the safety of personnel and the general public.
- 7.1.6 In relation to workforce planning, the Committee requested an update on recruitment /promotion processes. LBa confirmed the recruitment campaign launched and would be progressed as normal. The internal processes for promotions and support staff procedures were progressing virtually with slight delays. The main issue was the capacity to undertake training in a socially distant setting, therefore intake numbers have been reduced. The Committee requested an update on the promotion/recruitment processes be brought to the next meeting.
- ACTION: SSe**
- 7.1.7 The Committee commented on the positive work in regards to modern apprenticeships within the Service and CD noted that an online process for internal assessors/verifiers had been developed to continue progress in this area.

7.1.8 In regard to any potential RDS promotional issues, CD stated that this was being progressed through the Retained & Volunteer Duty System (RVDS) project by moving elements online, undertaking engagement to align and tailor requirements specifically to RVDS and also looking to identify how to proactively prepare individuals for development in advance of any promotion opportunities.

7.1.9 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

7.2 **Training, Safety and Assurance**

7.2.1 JD presented the Training, Safety and Assurance Progress and Performance Report 2020/21, noting that the Health and Safety Analysis was not available at this time due to competing demands within the data performance team. The following key areas were highlighted:

- Key successes for the training function within this quarter including premises being made COVID secure, trainee courses commenced, appointment of additional driving instructors and delivery of specialist rescue courses to support this aspect of service delivery.
- Risk regarding COVID impact and capacity have remained static.
- Specialist Rescue spotlight to highlight the reduction in training due to social distancing/travel restrictions. Early decision made to extend the currency of competencies for a number of areas across specialist rescue and work was ongoing to identify and prioritise training to ensure maintenance of these skills, whilst remaining compliant with Scottish Government's guidelines. Where necessary, in conjunction with Service Delivery locally deliverable training was identified, supported and delivered.
- Operational readiness - identifies 95% compliance rate for maintaining training for operational competence.
- Operational core competencies and incident command competencies remain constant. Remote incident command courses developed and piloted. This will be further developed to help delivery of this training remotely going forward.
- Recovery plan being developed to improve the delivery of training such as Urban Search & Rescue (USAR), Mass Decontamination (MD), etc.

7.2.2 In relation to the Incident Command Competency rates for Flexi Duty Officers reducing, the Committee queried what impact this had. JD confirmed that there were remedial actions being taken, competencies were being maintained through daily monitoring and mentoring processes and he was comfortable that this situation was improving.

7.2.3 In relation to how competency levels of dual contracts personnel were recorded, JD confirmed that they were considered as 2 separate contracts and therefore recorded as such. It was noted that there was potential for dual contracts to expedite competency of secondary roles, however this was also dependent on other factors such as availability for training nights, etc.

7.2.4 The Committee thanked the teams for the above reports, noting the format and informative content. The Committee formally acknowledged the level of work undertaken during the pandemic period in continuing to deliver business as usual and develop recovery plans.

7.2.5 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

7.3 **Health and Safety Improvement Plans Q2 2020/21**

7.3.1 JH presented a report outlining the progress made against the Annual Health and Safety Improvement Plan 2020/21 and associated bespoke Service Delivery Area (SDA) Directorate plans. The following key areas were highlighted:

- Impacted significantly by COVID-19 however good progress was being made in Quarter 3.
- Positive position in comparison to previous year with 45% completion.

7.3.2 The Committee noted and welcomed the improved position from previous years, particularly in light of the recent circumstances.

7.3.3 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

8 WORKPLACE CULTURE

8.1 Building the Future Together Programme (Cultural Framework)

8.1.1 CD presented the Committee with an update on the proposed Building the Future Together Programme (Cultural Framework Blueprint) and associated phased programme approach. The following key points were highlighted:

- Seeking to broaden and strengthen current activities/elements that support a positive organisational culture.
- Programme aims to support other key strategic interdependences ie future vision agile working, reset and renew routemap.
- Programme focusses on leadership, learning and development, training, safety and wellbeing and engaging with our people.
- Four key pillars are Staff Governance Charter, Leadership Style, Workforce and Values and Behaviours. These will be complimented by a 5th element which will review ongoing performance monitoring.
- Cultural framework was built on the strong foundations of structure, systems and strategies which would create an environment to support innovative thinking, empower leaders, build on skills, competencies and behaviours to deliver an SFRS that remains fit for the future.
- Engagement workshops scheduled including POD, Trade Unions and Heads of Functions/Senior Management Board (SMB). The Heads of Function/SMB workshop will be looking at defining the project board and membership, identify workstream leads, governance arrangements, capture and track programme benefits and interdependencies.
- Staff Governance Charter (Pillar 1) outlines the 6 commitments which demonstrates the Service's commitment to staff and clarifies expectations and also outlines the 6 key benefits.

8.1.2 In relation to promulgating information to personnel, CD stated that a communications plan would be developed with the aim to deliver consistent information in a concurrent manner.

8.1.3 CD confirmed that the language used within the charter had been lifted from the Strategic Plan and would be further adapted to ensure it is more palatable and would be included in the wider communications plan.

8.1.4 In relation to Rep Bodies forming part of the Programme Board, CD confirmed that this would be discussed at the workshop on 11 December 2020 and would welcome their early involvement and support. How to engage with non-unionised staff would be discussed at the SMB workshop to identify how best to structure these engagements.

8.1.5 It was requested that consideration be given to arranging a workshop for the Committee.

ACTION: CD

8.1.6 **The Committee noted the report.**

8.2 Skills Profiling Project

8.2.1 CD presented an update to the Committee on the Skills Profiling Project noting that it would be undertaken through a phased approach focusing on the development of a Skills Bank with later phases focussing on succession planning. Over 500 responses had been received following the launch of the Skills Bank questionnaire.

OFFICIAL

8.2.2 CD provided a brief overview to the Committee on the various skills/qualifications declared by employees and further detail would be brought back to the next meeting (March 2021).
ACTION: CD

8.2.3 In relation to succession planning, CD confirmed the importance across all levels within the organisation. Plans and processes were in place, however, there were opportunities to improve and enhance. CD to include talent management/succession planning within the proposed workshop as noted above. (Para 8.1.5)

8.2.3 **The Committee noted the report.**

8.3 **SFRS Staff Survey Update**

8.3.1 CD presented the Committee with an update on employee engagement activities and the proposed approach for the next Staff Survey in line with the Building the Future Together Programme. The following key points were highlighted:

- Next staff survey to be themed around the 6 commitments within the Staff Charter.
- Significant mapping would be required to link back to the 2018 survey to ensure continuity.
- Justification for the delay in the next survey.
- Employee engagement activities such as CO broadcast, COVID-19 recognition scheme, etc.

8.3.2 The Committee accepted the reasons for delaying the survey, cautioned against an extended delay and suggested that short pulse surveys could potentially be carried out in the interim. The Committee requested that a short paper be submitted to the Board to provide an update to highlight the good work ongoing during this period and future intentions.

8.3.3 CD indicated that consideration would be given to map out the proposed timeline, factor in the themes of the staff charter and link back to the 2018 survey. If appropriate, the potential to carry out an interim pulse survey would be considered.

8.3.4 **The Committee noted the report.**

*(The meeting broke at 1443 hrs and reconvened at 1450 hrs)
(G Lindsay joined at 1450 hrs)*

9 **PAY, REWARD AND BENEFITS**

9.1 **Standardisation of Uniformed Terms and Conditions - Final Review of Detached Duty Provisions**

9.1.1 GL provided an update to the Committee on the conclusions of the final review of the standardised Detached Duty (DD) provisions and noted the following key points:

- Original final review postponed due to the introduction of revised DD zones.
- Findings of interim reviews carried out in June 2019, concerns were raised around transportation of PPE and completion of travel claim forms.
- Final review found that the new DD zones were generally positively received.
- Between January and June 2020, over 8,000 DD occurred with only 80 being deployed outwith the identified DD zones, however, the majority of these were voluntary.
- One station has been identified, due to its geographical location, that may be subject to excessive DD and this would be further investigated with the Local Senior Officer.
- Slight increase in DD cost claims due to the wider revised zones.
- Issues with transportation of PPE and completion of travel claim forms were decreasing. New DD arrangements have received wide acceptance and were working well.

9.1.2 GL informed the Committee that the standardised DD provision savings were approximately £200,000 per annum.

9.1.3 **The Committee scrutinised the report and welcomed the positive outcome.**

(G Lindsay left at 1500 hrs)

9.2 **COVID-19 Employee Recognition Process**

9.2.1 RS presented the report to the Committee informing them of the introduction of a one off COVID-19 Employee Recognition process, which was approved by the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) on 12 November 2020. The following key points were noted:

- Launch of the SFRS Employee Recognition Scheme was delayed due to COVID. SLT approved the use of savings from the existing benefits schemes to purchase vouchers from Edenred to be used specifically to recognise staff during the pandemic period.
- Positive opportunity to demonstrate the value of staff and recognising their contributions both within the Service and to the wider community.

9.2.2 **The Committee noted the report and welcomed the recognition scheme.**

10 **TRAINING STRATEGY**

10.1 JD presented a report to the Committee providing an oversight of the Training Strategy for 2020-2025 and noted the following key points:

- Approved by SLT on 14 July 2020.
- Strategic objective of the training function with 7 priorities to support the delivery of same.
- Key themes outlined to support delivery of the objectives, priorities and provide guidance to managers to focus their attention towards delivery of priorities and strategic objectives.
- Timelines of training strategy key themes.
- Relationship between local and national delivery methods.

10.2 The Committee commented on the high number of deliverable dates recorded as Q4 in future years and asked for this to be reviewed to allow the Committee to clearly monitor progress, etc. JD noted the comments, stating that these were indicative dates and noted that work may have already commenced in some areas. Consideration should be given to raise the Committee's awareness of the scope of the work in responding to the TED programme of work and delivery plan and how effectively progress can be monitored.

10.3 Update to be provided at a future Board Strategy Day session. It was agreed that discussions outwith the meeting would take place on how to capture and monitor progress whilst avoiding duplication of reporting.

ACTION: PS/JD/PK

10.4 **The Committee noted the report.**

11 **LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT**

11.1 **Learning Needs Analysis**

11.1.1 CD presented the report to the Committee with an update on the status of the current Learning Needs Analysis (LNA), the impact of COVID-19 and the resulting requirement to review the 2020-21 LNA. The following key points were noted:

- Review of process to closer align with the business and financial planning cycles, inclusion of additional governance (via SMB).
- Introduction of learning partner approach to ensure regular engagement, appropriate monitoring within the functions, review process and changing priorities of and implementation of LNA to ensure that it remains a live document.

11.1.2 **The Committee noted the report and the revised process going forward.**

12 HEALTH AND WELLBEING

12.1 Re-establishment of Health and Wellbeing Activities

12.1.1 GT presented a report to the Committee outlining how the Health and Wellbeing Department will return to undertaking routine activities following cessation as a result of COVID-19 restrictions. The following key points were noted:

- Medical and fitness questionnaires were issued to employees throughout this period.
- Impact of local restriction levels were being continually monitored.
- Introduced appropriate Safe Systems of Work, risk assessments undertaken and upgrades to equipment and premises.

12.1.2 GT stated that the Service had some dispensation from Scottish Government to move in/out of different tier areas. However, aspects of fitness/medical assessments generate aerosol particles, therefore appropriate measures had to be in place to ensure the safety of all personnel.

12.1.3 **The Committee noted the report.**

13 UPDATE: WORKING TOGETHER FRAMEWORK

13.1 Update from Employee Partnership Forum (EPF)

13.1.1 LB advised the EPF held a meeting on 19 November 2020 and highlighted the following key areas discussed:

- Reduced crewing on appliances and assurance given that this was in response to COVID.
- Increased mobilisation to incidents outwith rolemaps.
- Consultation on Operational Control courses and the FBU's involvement.
- Day duty staff capability progress raised but requested to be raised through the appropriate governance route.
- Other items included the revision of Terms of Reference, format of Chief Officer's report, update on staff survey delay, recommencement of wellbeing activities, building the future together programme and the training strategy.
- Forum agenda to be revised to raise trade union business earlier in the meeting and no AOCB would be accepted.

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

13.2 Update from Partnership Advisory Forum (PAG)

13.2.1 LB advised the PAG held a meeting on 2 December 2020 and highlighted the following key areas discussed:

- Increased mobilisation to incidents outwith rolemaps. Concern that prior knowledge of Scottish Ambulance Service's non-attendance at this type of incident is known. Assurances given that this was not normal practice, however, the SFRS does have a responsibility to provide humanitarian services. Acknowledged that individual cases would be reviewed, if necessary.

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

14 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

14.1 SSe presented the risk register to the Committee stating that discussions were held within the Directorate to review the risks within the Directorate risk register to ensure that they are succinct, current and dynamic. It was recognised that some Directorate risks have strong links with other Directorates and discussions were ongoing to ensure these were succinct and aligned. Consideration to be given to the best way to highlight any significant high-level risks to the Committee.

14.2 The Committee noted the importance of being alive to the issues and that papers/discussions should link back to any risks.

14.3 **The Committee noted the report.**

15 FORWARD PLANNING

15.1 Health and Safety Policy and Management Arrangements Forward Planning Schedule

15.1.1 JH presented a report to the Committee detailing ongoing work in relation to the development and review of SFRS's Health and Safety (HS) Policy and associated management arrangements. It was noted that the increased workload due to COVID-19 has impacted on the development of management arrangements, however, it would be the intention to progress development and consultation work in Quarter 4 and Quarter 1 (2021/22), respectively.

15.1.2 **The Committee noted the report.**

15.1 POD Policy Review Schedule Update

15.1.1 The POD Policy Review Schedule Update report was presented to the Committee and the key policies review scheduled for the next quarter were highlighted. RS highlighted a review of the position and timescales due to COVID-19 and revised Directorate priorities. The next iteration of the report would reflect this revised position.

15.1.2 **The Committee noted the report.**

15.2 Committee Forward Plan Review

15.2.1 The Committee noted the Forward Plan.

15.3 Items for Consideration at Future IGF, Board and Strategy Day Meetings

15.3.1 The following items were identified for future meetings:

- Staff Survey Update (Board – Date TBC)
- Training Strategy 2020-2025 Update (Strategy Day – Date TBC)
- General issue on the avoiding duplication of reporting (Integrated Governance Forum).

16 REVIEW OF ACTIONS

16.1 HG confirmed the 4 formal actions arising during the meeting.

17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

17.1 The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday 4 March 2021 at 1300 hrs.

17.2 There being no further matters to discuss, the public meeting closed at 1545 hrs.

PRIVATE SESSION

18 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PRIVATE MEETING: 10 SEPTEMBER 2020

18.1 The minutes of the private meeting held on 10 September 2020 were approved as a true record of the meeting.

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

19.1 The draft minutes of the RANSc meeting on 10 September 2020 had been circulated to the Committee. The Committee noted the key issues discussed at the meeting of RANSc that was held earlier today (3 December 2020).

20 KEY CASE UPDATE 2020/21 – QUARTER 2

20.1 RS presented a report providing an overview of the Discipline, Grievance, Bullying and Harassment Statistics for Quarter 2 2020/21.