



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

PUBLIC MEETING – STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2020 @ 1300 HOURS

BY CONFERENCE FACILITIES

PRESENT:

Primrose Stark (Chair) (PS)
Sid Patten (SP)

Anne Buchanan (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 (SS) | Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Service Delivery |
| Fiona Munro (FM) | Head of People and Organisational Development |
| Scott Semple (SSe) | Head of People and Organisational Development |
| Karen Lockhart (KL) | Head of Safety and Assurance |
| Ceri Dodd (CD) | Deputy Head of People and Organisational Development |
| Geri Thomson (GT) | Deputy Head of People and Organisational Development |
| Liz Muir (LM) | Clinical Lead |
| Paul King (PK) | Deputy Assistant Chief Officer, Training and Employee Development |
| Ali Perry (AP) | Deputy Assistant Chief Officer, Prevention and Protection |
| Kirsty Darwent (KD) | Chair of SFRS Board |
| Richard Whetton (RW) | Head of Corporate Governance |
| Heather Greig (HG) | Board Support Executive Officer |
| Debbie Haddow (DH) | Board Support /Minutes |

OBSERVERS:

Nick Barr, Board Member
Siobhan Swanney, HROD Manager

1 WELCOME

- 1.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed those present. The virtual meeting protocol was reiterated to the attendees.

2 APOLOGIES

- 2.1 Bill McQueen, Board Member
Rachael Scott, Deputy Head of People and Organisational Development
Alasdair Cameron, Group Commander, Board Support

3 CONSIDERATION OF AND DECISION ON ANY ITEMS TO BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE

3.1 The Committee discussed and agreed that the Key Case report, Disciplinary Policy Update and Retained/Volunteer Duty System Update, the Revised Disciplinary Policy Review and the Retained and Volunteer Duty System Update would be heard in private session due to confidentiality in line with Standing Orders (Item 9F).

3.2 No further items were identified.

4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

4.1 None.

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 4 JUNE 2020

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

5.2 **The minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2020 were approved as a true record of the meeting.**

5.3 Matters Arising

5.3.1 In regard to the suspension of the full Mental Health Board reported at the last meeting, LB confirmed that the Mental Health Board had been stood up and would be run in parallel with the COVID-19 Wellbeing Group.

6 ACTION LOG

6.1 The Committee considered the action log and noted the updates.

6.2 **The Committee noted the updated Action Log and approved the removal of completed actions.**

7. PERFORMANCE AND RISK REPORT QUARTER 1 2020/21

7.1 People and Organisational Development (POD)

7.1.1 FM presented the Committee with the POD Progress and Performance Report 2020/21, noting the revised presentation, inclusion of additional performance data and the alignment with the Annual Operating Plan (AOP) objectives. The following key areas were highlighted:

- Impact of COVID-19 on AOP objectives and the opportunity to adapt processes to mitigate the impact.
- Temporary suspension of recruitment and routine health and wellbeing assessments. Risk assessment have now been undertaken and action plans developed.
- Temporary suspension of the Protection of Vulnerable Person (PVG) project.
- Mental Health Strategy launched and Mental Health Board stood back up.
- Reduction in cancellation of medical appointments. This was due to a different method of delivery.

7.1.2 In relation to Leavers Questionnaires, the Committee noted the low number of returns and FM stated that further communication was being developed to encourage staff/managers to provide this valuable feedback of their experiences within the Service. FM confirmed that should any bullying/harassment be reported, then direct contact is made with the individual concerned. Due to COVID-19, the Bullying and Harassment Project was temporarily suspended, however, this has now recommenced and the progress pre- and post-suspension was noted.

7.1.3 The Committee asked whether there was changes in policy re the relocation of dual contract staff. FM noted that this was a direct result of COVID-19 and the specific requirements and implications of this were being reviewed. There are provisions for staff to operate on dual contract roles and the broader implications of this were also being reviewed.

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- 7.1.4 In relation to the Talent Development programmes, CD confirmed that there were a range of talent assessments such as diagnostic interviews, impact coaching and eLearning modules, arrangements in place throughout the programme.
- 7.1.5 In relation to the SFRS succession planning framework and early scoping, LB informed the Committee that data gathered in the workforce plan feeds into various processes including the leadership development process which allow the Service to identify relevant skills required. The benefits of this joint process and accurate intelligence were already being seen across the Service. The Committee intimated that they would welcome the opportunity to hear some personal reflects on the programme.
- 7.1.6 It was noted that the annual review of the Working Together Framework had been deferred due to COVID-19 and there were no particular areas of concerns.
- 7.1.7 In relation to routine firefighter health assessments, FM noted that these were impacted by lockdown, social distancing and the medical advice not to conduct certain aspects of the assessment. Appropriate risk assessments and changes to the guidance has allowed recruitment health assessments to recommence albeit at a slower than normal pace. LB commented on the focus on wellbeing during this period and the overall impact on resources/workloads within the Directorate.
- 7.1.8 LB provided the Committee with a brief update on the People, Training, Finance and Asset Systems project and progress to date.
- 7.1.9 In relation to the Protection of Vulnerable Group (PVG) project, Disclosure Scotland has developed a digital process which would allow the current backlog and future processing to be carried out in a timely manner. It is anticipated that the project would be back on scheduled by the end of March 2021.
- 7.1.10 In relation to the risk POD4 (Recruit of Staff), LB advised that the situation was beginning to improve, mitigation measures were in place and progress was now being made with planned recruitment.
- 7.1.11 Within the POD Progress and Risk Table, the Committee commented on the importance of accurately denoting the direction of the risk movement arrow along with the narrative and RAG status. GT provided clarification on the position with the Directorate's objective to implement vaccination programme for staff.
- 7.1.12 GT provided an update on the Directorate's objective to introduce substance screening programme. Due to this still under development, it was proposed that this would be removed from the plan and brought back at an appropriate time once progress was being made. A summary of the proposed delays, implications and wider impacts would be helpful for the Committee's understanding.
- 7.1.13 The Committee commented on the potential to promote flu vaccinations across the Service and GT confirmed that a paper was being presented Strategic Leadership Team.
- 7.2 Training, Safety and Assurance**
- 7.2.1 Paul King presented the first iteration of the separate Training, Safety and Assurance performance report and noted the overall positive position albeit with the full implications of COVID-19 still to be realised. The following key areas were highlighted:
- Objective to embed core competency skills showing a reduction in risk due to the focus on core competence skills during COVID-19.
 - Training Needs Analysis (TNA) Review objective reported an increase in risk due to specialist competencies being extended during the COVID-19.

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- Quarterly performance stats for core, incident command and specialist rescue competences including implications of COVID-19, mitigation measures and recovery strategy.
- To ensure currency of skills, mitigating measures have been put in place to review individuals' competency by means of maintaining skills at operational or station level.
- Future review of Performance Indicators.

7.2.2 The Committee gained assurance from the innovations being used to maintain competency skills, in particular RDS and flexi duty officers, during this challenging period.

7.2.3 NB noted that the Service Delivery Committee would be spotlighting the Service's ability to maintain capacity and resources within Service Delivery to meet statutory duties and asked what the impact was on frontline deployment. PK stated that the Service prioritise competencies to ensure legislative compliance alongside maintaining our duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act to maintain information, instruction and training to staff. He noted that the currency timescales were predominately set by the Service and where possible competency was being maintained at station level rather than centrally quality assured. Some specialist skills were externally accredited and had definitive timescales, however, this was being reviewed.

7.2.4 KL presented the health and safety aspects performance report and the following key areas were highlighted:

- Implementation of inhouse Health and Safety Management System was reporting green and on target.
- Development HS Improvement Plans 2020/21 delayed due to COVID-19 but reporting green as residual 2019/20 work continued.
- Increased demand on health and safety resources within the Service including support/guidance for home working arrangements, development of reporting processes to HSE, development of risk assessments and management plans to ensure COVID secure workplaces.
- Additional workloads have resulted in delays to 2020/21 Improvement Plan, development of management arrangements, introduction of new Health and Safety Policy (reflecting new Directorate arrangements).
- Outline of progress on Improvement Plans within Service Delivery Areas (SDA) and Directorate during the Quarter 1.
- Positive reporting on all 6 key performance indicators and downwards trends over the 3-year averages.
- Accident/Injuries stats are reporting static over a 2-year period for the West Service Delivery Area and further work to be carried out to understand the reason.
- RIDDOR reports primarily relate to manual handling/musculoskeletal (MSK) injuries. As a result, the MSK Risk Reduction Group will be reconvened.

7.2.5 KL confirmed that the HS Improvement Plans are developed on a risk based approach in agreement with the Directorates/SDA. It was also noted that any residual actions were carried over to the following years plans.

7.3 **The Committee scrutinised the reports.**

(The meeting broke at 1435 hrs and reconvened at 1440 hrs)

8 WORKPLACE CULTURE

8.1 Update on Staff Survey

8.1.1 AP presented the Committee with the Q4 update report of progresses against the National and 30 Local Action Plans established following the SFRS Staff Survey undertaken in September/October 2018. The following key points were highlighted:

- High level of response from staff.

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- Three key themes were identified – Improve resources, improve processes for sharing information across SFRS and take action to make staff feel more valued and improve working lives.
- 344 individual actions were raised with 80% completed, 11% on target, 5% extended and 4% off target/not started.
- Off target/not started actions were attributed to progress against the broadening the role process or as a result of COVID-19.
- Communicating progress across the Service had been impacted due to COVID-19 and competing demands on resources within Communications and Engagement (C&E) function.

8.1.2 The Committee commented on the impressive progress made and asked what the plans were for communicating the overall progress to staff. AP noted that a broad communication strategy was launched at the start of the year to make staff aware of progress. This strategy included branding of staff survey and articles/videos in various Service publications/social media platforms. It was noted that this was suspended due to COVID-19, however, progress was now being made to relaunch the strategy.

8.1.3 The Committee noted the increased communication recently and asked whether this has shown a positive improvement in communicating with staff. LB highlighted that the C&E function were inundated with COVID-19 related queries, and introduced innovative solutions eg Chief's Broadcast, helping to raise awareness and focus on wellbeing. This had further helped to strengthened staff engagement and improve communications across the Service. The Committee were keen for the improvements to be captured and linked back to the staff survey to evidence "*you said, we did*".

8.1.4 LB indicated that it would be the intention to propose delaying the next staff survey until 2022 and outlined the reasons. The Committee referred to the previous debate on launching the staff survey and noted that an update report, including any recommendations, reason for delay, current arrangements and mitigations, would be available in due course following SLT/SMB's decision on the proposed delay.

8.1.5 The Committee suggested that the Chief's future staff engagement sessions could be used to highlight the positive work being done. LB intimated that this may not be the appropriate forum but would raise this with the Chief. LB noted that positive "*you said, we did*" branded messages would be shared with staff in the coming year.

8.1.6 The Committee commented on the numerous communications projects and the need to remain focussed and aware of the wider picture to manage these and communicate with staff effectively.

8.1.7 **The Committee noted the report.**

8.2 **SFRS We are Positive About Disability Guidance**

8.2.1 CD presented an update to the Committee on the launch of the "*We are Positive About Disability' - Guide to Reasonable Adjustments and Supporting Staff with a Disability*". The review of the guidance was undertaken to ensure that up-to-date information was available for staff and managers relating to reasonable adjustments. The guidance would now be communicated across the Service for awareness.

8.2.2 The Committee commented that the positive value that diversity could bring into the Service and need to communicate this. CD noted the comments and would consider including this theme within the paper.

8.2.3 **The Committee noted the report.**

9 PAY, REWARD AND BENEFITS

9.1 Final Review of Detached Duty Policy

9.1.1 FM provided a verbal update to the Committee on the Final Review of Detached Duty Policy and the 6-month review of the revised detached duty zones. Data was being gathered and a full report would be brought back to the Committee in December 2020. General feedback received to date was the overall acceptance of the revised duty zones and no further issues had been raised by the Fire Brigade Union.

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

10 HEALTH AND WELLBEING

10.1 Clinical Governance

10.1.1 LM presented a report to the Committee outlining the review of the Clinical Governance Action Plan and Framework for use within Health and Wellbeing to provide structure of service and ensure continuous quality service provision which aligns with best practice. The Action Plan also links into the Safe, Effective, Quality Occupational Health Service which is a voluntary accreditation scheme. The 3-year plan had been extended for a further 2 years until 2023 and may be subject to changes going forward.

10.1.2 The Committee were informed that the Clinical Lead would be invited onto the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

10.1.3 The Committee praised the professional approach and work undertaken and noted the progress that had been made.

10.14 **The Committee welcomed and noted the report.**

11 LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

11.1 Career Ready Evaluation and Recommendation

11.1.1 CD presented the report to the Committee with the findings from the evaluation of the Career Ready Pilot. The Committee were provided with background information, benefits for both students and mentors and the proposals for future courses.

11.1.2 LB noted the Committee's comments on the potential to highlight the good work in this area at the upcoming Ministerial Annual Performance Review.

11.1.2 **The Committee noted the report and offered their continued support.**

12 UPDATE: WORKING TOGETHER FRAMEWORK

12.1 Update from Employee Partnership Forum

12.1.1 Due to no urgent business being brought forward, this meeting was cancelled.

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

12.2 Update from Partnership Advisory Forum

12.2.1 Due to no urgent business being brought forward, this meeting was cancelled.

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

13 ACTION PLAN UPDATES

13.1 HMFSI Training of Retained Duty Systems Personnel Action Plan

13.1.1 PK presented the report to the Committee with the action plan, 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:

- Cognisance taken of the in-house training review.

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- 22 No. recommendations were categorised into 5 main area - Initial Training, Maintenance of Skills, Specialist Skills, Incident Command Training and other general observations.
- Action plan created to address recommendations and contains 31 actions.
- 61% of actions have been completed. Due to interdependencies, 5 actions have been deferred.

13.1.2 The Committee noted the progress made against the action plan and questioned what the impact of delivering the completed actions for frontline personnel, the overall benefits and timescales for delivery.

13.1.3 PK confirmed the overall progress made which included the delivery of the several quick wins elements. Delivery and implementation of longer term actions, including decentralisation, were currently difficult to quantify. He noted that the Project Manager for the Training Review Continuous Improvement programme, had still to be appointed. As a result, performance measures including identifying outputs and outcomes was still to be identified. During the COVID-19 pandemic a number of short term measures have been put in place eg eLearning, however, these measures need to be refined before rolling out as a permanent measure.

13.1.4 PK informed the Committee of the work being undertaken with Service Delivery to enable certain aspects of training and practical selection processes to be carried out in localised areas. A dedicated working group has been tasked to review this.

13.1.5 The Committee acknowledged the work being done, the measures in place and commented that these should be articulated fully.

13.1.6 **The Committee noted the report.**

14 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

14.1 LB presented the risk register to the Committee noting that earlier discussions covered the risks.

14.3 **The Committee noted the report.**

15 FORWARD PLANNING

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.

15.1.2 **The Committee noted the report.**

15.2 Committee Forward Plan Review

15.2.1 The following items were identified for the December 2020 meeting:

- Final Report on Detached Duty Policy

15.2.2 For information, the Committee were informed for future scheduled meetings:

- PSt, and Nick Barr (Service Delivery Committee Chair) to discuss Scrutiny of Operational Training (11 September 2020).
- PSt, AB and LB to discuss the focus of the Committee, invitation to be extended to JD (23 September 2020).

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

15.3.1 It was suggested that a future workshop be considered to discuss the aspects of industrial relations, restructure of Strategic Leadership Team and benefits realisation linked with Value Added Statement.

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16 REVIEW OF ACTIONS

16.1 No actions were raised during the meeting.

17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

17.1 On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked SP for his contributions throughout his tenure and wished him well for the future.

17.2 The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday 3 December 2020 at 1300 hrs.

17.3 There being no further matters to discuss, the public meeting closed at 1530 hrs.

PRIVATE SESSION

18 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PRIVATE MEETING: 4 JUNE 2020

18.1 The minutes of the private meeting held on 4 June 2020 were approved as a true record of the meeting.

19 PRIVATE ACTION LOG

19.1 The Committee considered the action log and noted the update.

20 RANSC UPDATE

20.1 The draft minutes of the RANSc meeting on 4 June 2020 had been circulated to the Committee. The Committee noted the key issues discussed at the meeting of RANSc that was held earlier today (10 September 2020).

21 KEY CASE UPDATE 2020/21 – QUARTER 1

21.1 FM presented a report providing an overview of the Discipline, Grievance, Bullying and Harassment Statistics for Quarter 1 2020/21.

22 DISCIPLINARY POLICY

22.1 FM presented the revised and updated Disciplinary Policy for information.

23 RETAINED AND VOLUNTEER DUTY SYSTEM UPDATE

23.1 SS presented a report to the Committee providing a strategic overview of the Retained and Volunteer Duty System (RVDS) specifically, in relation to challenges, research, actions underway to address recruitment, selection and retention issues.