



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

PUBLIC SPECIAL MEETING - SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

THURSDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2021 @ 0930 HRS

BY CONFERENCE FACILITIES

PRESENT:

Kirsty Darwent (Chair) (KD)
Brian Baverstock (BB)
Anne Buchanan (AB)
Fiona Thorburn (FT)
Malcolm Payton (MP)
Mhairi Wylie (MW)

Nick Barr (NB)
Lesley Bloomer (LBI)
Marieke Dwarshuis (MD)
Bill McQueen (Deputy Chair) (BMcQ)
Tim Wright (TW)

IN ATTENDANCE:

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|------------------------|---|
| Martin Blunden (MB) | Chief Officer |
| 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 |
| Sarah O'Donnell (SO'D) | Director of Finance and Contractual Services |
| Stuart Stevens (SS) | Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Service Delivery |
| Paul Stewart (PSt) | Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Service Development |
| Richard Whetton (RW) | Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance |
| Alasdair Cameron (AC) | Group Commander Board Support |
| Debbie Haddow (DH) | Board Support/Minutes |

OBSERVERS:

Heather Greig Board Support Executive Officer

1 CHAIR'S WELCOME

1.1 KD opened the meeting and welcomed those present and participating via MS Teams.

2 APOLOGIES

2.1 Primrose Stark, Board Member

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

3.1 The Board formally agreed the Liability Claims (previously circulated by email for approval), Draft Long Term Strategic Vision and High Level Timelines Change would be taken in private due confidential matters relating to individuals (Standing Order 9A) and confidential matters subject to consultation/negotiation (Standing Order 9F), respectively.

3.2

No further private items were identified.

4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

4.1 None.

5 BUDGET STRATEGY 2021-22

5.1 SO'D presented the Budget Strategy 2021-22 for approval. The Scottish Government's *Scottish Budget 2021/22* only covers the period of one financial year and may require further revision following the publication of the UK Government's budget on 3 March 2021. The following key areas were highlighted:

- Draft SFRS budget 2021/22 increased from previous year by 2.8%.
- In recognition of the continuing impact of COVID, budgets would be re-baselined on pre-COVID annual activities whilst taking cognisance of significant recovery elements would be required in identified areas.
- Assumption of ring-fenced funding being provided for the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) and the COP26 summit.
- Recognition of the Scottish Public Sector Pay Policy (PSPP) (support staff pay) and continued involvement in UK-wide National Joint Council arrangements (uniformed staff pay).
- Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) projections would be continually monitored and non-pay budgets set accordingly.
- Three-year capital programme to be refreshed with firm proposals for 2021/22.
- Continue to explore and maximise opportunities for co-location, as well as identifying and bidding for funding to support our SFRS Carbon Management Plan,
- Future anticipated sale of both Maddison and Thornton sites.
- Programme 2020/21 re-profiling, due to COVID, would be considered when setting the budget for the coming year.
- Draft Capital budget (£32.5m) not sufficient to address the significant investment required in the medium to longer term.

5.2 The Board asked for clarity on the application of the Public Sector Pay Policy across all staff. SO'D noted that the PSPP does not apply to uniformed staff, however, the Service felt that the same level of uplift would be appropriate. The Service would use their influence within the NJC to seek an uplift in line with PSPP. It was noted that the NJC were commencing pay negotiation discussions with the Fire Brigade Union.

5.3 In relation to baselining, SO'D commented the challenges in estimating the current budget, requirement to identify an appropriate budget for the longer term and noted that further work was required to qualify catch up elements. SO'D reminded the Board that the financial monitoring reports contain details of any savings/costs incurred because of COVID as well as the net position.

5.4 The Board suggested that further consideration could be given to the Resource Strategy and potential efficiencies. SO'D indicated that going forward the Long-Term Vision and Service Delivery Model Programme (SDMP) agendas would offer a wider scope to develop a more strategic and longer term sustainable approach to the resource budget.

5.5 **The Board approved the Budget Strategy 2021-22.**

6 STAFF ENGAGEMENT PROCESS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A LONG TERM STRATEGIC VISION FOR SFRS

6.1 MMcA presented the Board with a report providing full thematic analysis of the feedback received from the staff engagement on the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) long-term strategic vision. The following key points were noted:

- Engaged with staff on what were the key issues facing the Service over the next 5-10 years to allow them to influence and shape the long-term vision.

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- Specific public engagement yet to be undertaken, however the Service are building on the previous public consultation carried out ie service transformation agenda. Intention to hold a public consultation exercise on the draft vision following the period of purdah, building on the previous public consultation carried out ie service transformation agenda.
- Extensive consultation undertaken on the Strategic Plan and Local Plans.
- Previous consultation had been on the themes of change and the public's perception has been used to shape the discussions/dialogue with staff.
- Reason for methodology being qualitative was to allow for an open response from staff without directing the conversation.
- Further staff engagement session with the vision to be scheduled, prior to public consultation, and would gather all quantitative data on the emerging vision.
- Engagement process commenced with 3 online leadership events for senior management (September 2020), independently facilitated workshops, staff survey and station-based staff feedback.
- Discussions focused on how the Service works and what the culture was rather than the future vision. 90% of staff answered that change was either important or very important. Key themes included the need for localisation and employment; strong support for working with Scottish Ambulance Services (SAS); need to get organisational basics right, remove unnecessary centralisation; need to clarify priorities; appropriate change management processes; creating capacity for change; greater utilisation of technology and support staff; change fatigue; modernising RVDS model.
- Intention to hold further staff engagement (You said, We did) approach prior to purdah and public consultation following purdah. Vision to be brought back to the Board for decision later in the year.

6.2 MB offered the Board his opinion on the consultation feedback and the outcomes of the focus groups including the tendency to focus on the individuals own area within the Service. MMcA noted that the purpose of the consultation and engagement was to begin discussions with staff to ensure they feel invested and fully involved in shaping the future vision of the Service.

6.3 In regard to OHCA response, MMcA noted that staff were fully aware of the benefits to local communities but there were still some reservations.

6.4 MMcA confirmed that Improvement Services facilitated the focus groups, which were constructed to ensure a balanced representation of roles, in order to provide an environment to encourage open discussion and exchange of views. MMcA to circulate the original report compiled by Improvement Services.

ACTION: MMcA

6.5 MMcA to circulate copies of the Slido Polls results as contained within Appendix A. He noted that all background documents would be published online in due course.

ACTION: MMcA

6.6 In regard to the concerns raised about promotions, training, division between staff and management. MMcA noted that these mirrored the issues raised through the staff survey. He noted that although these issues were raised, the results of the staff survey found that individual relationships with line managers were good and these issues may be due to the size of the organisation and perceptions. MMcA noted that staff wanted clarity on national policy/priorities/framework with the flexibility to make this work at a local community level to achieve local outcomes.

6.7 The Board stated thatl getting the basics ie processes, bureaucracy, etc, right was fundamental. MMcA noted that the People, Training, Finance and Assets (PTFA) project would create processes and systems that benefit the Service.

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- 6.8 MB commented on the benefits from receiving staff feedback, ensuring clear communication on potential changes including the rationale, provide follow up on 'You Said, We Did' information, and the need to be consistent with our approach to staff engagement. MMcA noted that lessons have been learnt from previous engagement and also through various gateway reviews, these will be reflected in the approach moving forward.
- 6.9 The Board commented on the sense of constant change or no progress, noting that this primarily depends on the staffing groups but nevertheless both cause change fatigue. In reflection, the Service needs to more proactive to introduce and make changes.
- 6.10 A discussion took place on the importance of consistency of communication, creating an environment of trust and support, equipping managers to lead their teams and deliver the SFRS future vision. It was recognised that this would be a period of significant cultural change for the Service going forward.
- 6.11 MB informed the Board that the Annual Operating Plan would be further refined and the 3 areas of priority would be clearly communicated within the Service. It was noted that there should be clear communication on areas which were no longer a priority and therefore not being progressed further. The Service needs to be consistent in their approach and remain aligned at every stage.
- 6.12 MMcA reminded the Board that a Consolidated Local Plan Review Report would be presented to the March meeting. The report outlines the view of the communities and key partners on local plan engagement. MMcA agreed to discuss with MW (off table) the potential of individual's bias potentially affect the perception of their communities' views.
- 6.13 In relation to culture change, LBa stated that this was a key focus for the Service going forward. She commented on the positive responses within the recent Wellbeing survey on the level of support provided by the Service during this difficult period. The approach currently being rolled out to managers was that change is not a separate thing, change it is now the Service and staff would be engaged in all areas.
- 6.14 LBa reminded the Board of the significant changes made as to how the Service had worked over the past year and the potential to further refine and personalise this for individuals.
- 6.15 The Board asked how the Service could embed cultural change. LBa stated that this would be achieved through the formal route of Building the Future Together Programme and the more informal route of changing behaviours/practices, consistently repeated until they are naturally embedded.
- 6.16 **The Board scrutinised the report.**
- 7 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
- 7.1 The next meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on Thursday 25 March 2021 at 1000 hrs.
- 7.2 There being no further matters to discuss in public, the meeting closed at 1105 hours.

PRIVATE SESSION

- 8** **LIABILITY CLAIM AGAINST THE SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**
- 8.1 SO'D presented 2 reports to the Board for formal submission, noting both reports had previously been circulated, by email on 8 January 2021 and 14 January 2021, and approved.
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- 9** **DRAFT LONG TERM VISION**
- 9.1 MMcA presented a report to the Board setting out the draft Long Term Strategic Vision for the Service for their scrutiny.
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- 10** **HIGH-LEVEL TIMELINE FOR CHANGE**
- 10.1 RH presented a report to the Board outlining the high-level timeline to the Board, that had been created to co-ordinate activities around three key pieces of strategic work being undertaken, for their scrutiny