



SCOTTISH  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

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

**THURSDAY 27 AUGUST 2020 @ 1000 HRS**

**BY CONFERENCE FACILITIES**

**PRESENT:**

Kirsty Darwent (Chair) (KD)  
Brian Baverstock (BB)  
Anne Buchanan (AB)  
Malcolm Payton (MP)  
Tim Wright (TW)

Nick Barr (NB)  
Lesley Bloomer (LBI)  
Bill McQueen (BMcQ)  
Primrose Stark (PS)  
Mhairi Wylie (MW)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Martin Blunden (MB)	Chief Officer
Liz Barnes (LBa)	Director of People and Organisational Development
Sarah O'Donnell (SO'D)	Director of Finance and Contractual Services
Mark McAteer (MMcA)	Director of Strategic Planning, Performance and Communications
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 Corporate Governance
Claire Owens (CO)	Property Development Manager (Item 14 only)
Alasdair Cameron (AC)	Group Commander Board Support
Debbie Haddow (DH)	Board Support/Minutes

**OBSERVERS:**

Heather Greig	Board Support Executive Officer
Marion Lang	Corporate Admin Team Leader
Vlad Valiente	Legal Services Manager

**1 CHAIR'S WELCOME**

1.1 KD opened the meeting and welcomed those present and participating via Skype. AC reiterated the pre-meeting guidance and virtual meeting protocol to the attendees.

**2 APOLOGIES**

2.1 Marieke Dwarshuis, Board Member  
Sid Patten, Board Member  
Fiona Thorburn, Board Member  
Ross Haggart, Deputy Chief Officer  
John Dickie, Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Training, Safety and Assurance

## OFFICIAL

- 3 CONSIDERATION OF AND DECISION ON ANY ITEMS TO BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE**
- 3.1 The Board agreed that a section of the Chair and Chief's reports and the Annual Performance Review Report 2019/20 would be taken in private due to confidential matters (Standing Order 9G).
- 3.2 No further private items were identified.
- 4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**
- 4.1 None
- 5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:**
- 5.1 **Thursday 25 June 2020**  
Item 11.2.3 – Service Delivery Committee Update – Request that the statement relating to Gold Decision Making be amended to provide further clarity. It was agreed to amend the text to *“In relation to the Gold Decision Making, KD noted that the governance arrangements for rapid decision making were introduced as an additional layer of decision making. The de-escalation of the current COVID-19 situation will now allow decisions that were made to be reviewed and, if necessary, confirmed within the normal governance procedures.”*
- Item 11.3.1 – Staff Governance Committee – Date of Committee to be amended to 4 June 2020.
- 5.2 **Thursday 30 July 2020 (Special)**
- 5.2.1 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.
- 5.3 **Subject to the above amendment being made, the minutes of the meetings held on 25 June 2020 and 30 July 2020 were approved as a true record of the meetings.**
- 5.4 Matters Arising
- 5.4.1 In relation to the Environmental Policy, it was queried whether an action should have been raised. On review of the previous minutes, the Chair confirmed that the Environmental Policy was approved with no amendments. Whilst the Board made comment on the proposed waste reduction percentage, which the Director of Finance and Contractual Services would take into consideration, no formal action was raised.
- 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.
- 7.2 **Members noted the updated Decision Log.**
- 8 CHAIR'S REPORT**
- 8.1 The Chair presented her report noting events which had occurred since the Board meeting held on 25 June 2020, highlighting:
- Common themes from Local Authority Chief Executives meetings included strong constructive relationships with Local Senior Officers and their teams, wider collaboration and closer working relationships, shared asset/resources, enthusiasm for tri-service officers and more flexible ways of working (remote areas).
  - Recent discussions at Reform Collaboration Group (RCG) included tri-service roles, out of hospital cardiac arrest, lifelines, wellbeing and cross service mental health support, and joint approach to leadership. Workshop to be arranged to refresh the

## OFFICIAL

Strategic direction with recommendations being brought back to RCG before being shared with individual Boards.

8.2 The Board commented on the potential for a future tri-service Board engagement event/meeting and KD confirmed that was still being considered but it would need to have a clear and focussed purpose. Board Support Team to consider as part of future Board development.

8.3 **The Board noted the report.**

### 9 CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT

9.1 The Chief Officer presented his report noting events which had occurred since the Board meeting held on 25 June 2020, highlighting:

- Operational activity updates including the recent significant flooding incidents, train derailment, statistics on dwelling/vehicle/other fires, consistently high level of wholetime staff availability and RDS availability returning to pre-lockdown levels.
- Update of COVID-19 related staff absences.
- Retirement of USAR Search & Rescue dog, Diesel.
- Attendance on Future Visions course with the focus being adaptive leadership.
- Correspondence sent to Matt Wrack, Fire Brigades Union (circulated separately).
- Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest (OHCA) discussions at Strategic Leadership Team to support Scottish Ambulance Service in the coming winter months. Request for formal discussions on Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA) to be extended to the Fire Brigades Union Scottish Executive.
- Service Vision engagement events with Station Commanders/Grade 6 update scheduled.
- Ongoing discussions regarding future budget and potential implications on service delivery.
- Accenture report circulated and presentation to Board scheduled for 3 September 2020.
- Update on Service Delivery Model Programme deliverables.
- Update on the Command and Control Futures project.
- Preparation for upcoming events including EU exit, Euro Football Championship 2021 and COP 26.

9.2 The Board recognised and thanked all personnel involved in the train derailment incident.

**The Board moved into private session at 1030 hrs to discuss confidential issues.  
The Board moved back into public session at 1045 hrs.**

9.3 **The Board noted the report.**

### 10 SERVICE TRANSFORMATION UPDATE

10.1 PSt updated Members in regard to Service Transformation matters which had occurred since the Board meeting held on 25 June 2020, highlighting the following:

- Senior Management Board meeting held on 19 August 2020.
- Transformation and Major Projects Committee meeting held on 6 August 2020. Project updates were given, noting slippages and the pathways to green and next steps identified.
- OHCA change request to include Memorandum of Understanding and Clinical Governance.
- Service Delivery Model Programme continues to progress with the realignment of resources to reduce any potential slippage in time.
- Community Risk Index Model continuing to develop.

10.2 **The Board noted the verbal update.**

**11 COMMITTEE UPDATES**

**11.1 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC)**

11.1.1 BB reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 9 July 2020 and referred the Board to the attached draft minute. The following was highlighted:

- Internal Audit progress had been impacted by COVID-19.
- Assurances gained on the positive engagement and relationship with the Executive.
- Discussion on gap analysis (transformation) and highlighted differences in type of audit. Committee noted the potential impact from COVID/rejected pay deal/ Accenture work on the change programme.
- Management response to the Fraud Risk Management Audit.
- HMFSI Annual Report.
- Integration of joint approached from HMFSI, Internal and External Auditors.

**11.1.2 ARAC Annual Report to Board and Accountable Officer**

BB presented the report to the Board which confirmed the Committee gained assurances from audit activity, met their terms of reference and had the necessary skill set to undertake their role. On conclusion, the Committee were assured that the Service continues to operate effective risk management, internal controls and governance.

11.1.3 **The Board noted the draft minutes and the Annual Report to the Board and Accountable Officer.**

**11.2 Service Delivery Committee (SDC)**

11.2.1 NB reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 11 June 2020 and referred the Board to the attached draft minutes noting that a verbal update was provided at the previous Board meeting. The following was highlighted

- Further assurance was provided in regard to the HMFSI Closure Report for Performance Management Systems to allow this to be closed.

11.2.2 **The Board noted the draft minutes and verbal update.**

**11.3 Staff Governance Committee (SGC)**

11.3.1 PS reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 4 June 2020 and noted that the draft minutes were previously circulated and discussed. The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for 10 September 2020.

11.3.2 PS noted that a confirmed date for the Resolution Advisory Panel (RAP) meeting was still to be identified.

11.3.3 **The Board noted the draft minutes and verbal update.**

**11.4 Transformation and Major Projects Committee (TMPC)**

11.4.1 PSt reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 6 August 2020 and provided a verbal update, highlighting the following:

- Service Transformation project updates including
  - OHCA - milestones had been met, improved engagement with Scottish Ambulance Service, overall costs were still unknown.
  - Youth Volunteer Scheme Change Request/Closing report – Successfully delivered 6 schemes with the remaining 4 to be progressed under business as usual.
  - Command and Control Futures change request – delay due to COVID-19, ongoing engagement and discussion with Systel to progress and deliver project.
  - Service Delivery Model Programme COVID-19 Impact Assessment

## OFFICIAL

- Major Project dashboard updates including West Asset Resource Centre, McDonald Road Refurbishment and People, Training, Finance and Assets.

### 11.4.2 **The Board noted the verbal update.**

### 11.5 **Integrated Governance Forum (IGF)**

11.5.1 KD stated that the first meeting of the Forum took place on 9 July 2020 and their remit would focus on good governance, identifying overlaps and common themes across the Committees. The following was highlighted:

- Discussed the potential overlap relating to training and clinical governance between the Staff Governance and Service Delivery Committee's. A separate meeting had been scheduled to discuss this further.
- Board engagement relating to the future vision of the organisation.
- Themes emerging from Board Members Appraisals. Dates to be offered to Board Members to have a mid-year light touch review.
- Future Board Member Only day scheduled but this is dependent on the Ministerial Annual Performance Review going ahead on 22 September 2020.
- Future update from this Forum will be given during the Chair/Chief's Update report.

### 11.5.2 **The Board noted the verbal update.**

## 12 **REVIEW OF SUSPENSION OF PUBLIC ACCESS TO SFRS BOARD PUBLIC MEETINGS**

12.1 RW presented a report to the Board seeking to review the decision regarding public access to meetings of the Board/Committees and outlined options, noting the following key points:

- Test session of broadcasting a meeting was held on 24 August 2020.
- Consideration to be given for an additional option of recording and publishing the meeting.

12.2 During a full discussion the Board discussed the approximate timescale before public meetings would resume, their awareness of the statutory duty to hold public meetings, the viability of undertaking the proposed options during the current situation, the need to ensure a high professional standard of broadcasting/recording and the potential to explore stable longer term options.

12.3 The Chair requested that a further review be undertaken to identify future longer term options with an update to be provided at the next meeting (October 2020). It was agreed that the status quo would remain during these challenging times and until such time further consideration could be given to longer term options.

**ACTION: RW**

12.4 **Following consideration of the proposed options, the Board requested that further longer term options be explored and brought back for scrutiny and any future decision.**

*(The meeting broke at 1143 hrs and reconvened at 1155 hrs.)*

## 13 **INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2020/21**

13.1 BB presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the Internal Audit Plan and Internal Audit Charter 2020/21 and highlighted the following key points:

- Considered previously by the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee
- Good range of audits planned.

13.2 BB noted the purpose of the proposed B1 Implementation of SFRS Corporate Governance structure, Strategy and Reporting review as contained within the plan. It was further noted that the Auditors would develop the audit remit with the Executive

**OFFICIAL**

Lead (discussions still to be held) and the outcomes would be to add value, understand the current position and evolve. Details on this proposed audit remit would be circulated to the Board in due course.

**ACTION: MMcA**

**13.3 The Board approved the Internal Audit Plan and Charter for 2020/21.**

*(C Owens joined the meeting at 1200 hrs)*

**14 STANDARD STATION DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

14.1 SO'D presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the Standard Station Design principles that would be adopted by the Service in future development of fire stations. The following key points were highlighted:

- Purpose of standard station design was to target the best option for investment.
- Detailed exercise undertaken to identify the generic layout for a modern station design.
- Strategic principles to be adopted for each project would take into consideration requirements for accommodation, adjacency, corporate specification, contaminant control, design flexibility, environmental issues, staff/visitor welfare, security, safety and training.
- Significant engagement carried out with various key stakeholders.
- Key financial implications highlighting the substantial capital investment required.
- Ongoing investment required for existing fire stations, in particular those with Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) panels.

14.2 SO'D noted that the increased footprint and move to develop personal space within the station would benefit social distancing going forward. It was also noted that the reduction of water consumption, bicycle storage and charger points for electric vehicles, were incorporated within the principles and formed part of the Carbon Management Plan.

14.3 SO'D stated that the Service was not able to set aspirational targets against the future condition of premises in the short/medium/long term. This was due to the significant amount of funding required with no future funding stream identified. The Service would, however, prioritise stations which were affected by RAAC panels alongside taking cognisance with the future vision programme.

14.4 SO'D confirmed that the Service's current default position was for joint developments with Scottish Ambulance Service/Police Scotland. To date, the Service had only refurbished existing premises and reminded the Board of the successful re-development of Lerwick Fire Station with Scottish Ambulance Service.

14.5 The Board commented on the accuracy of the indicative construction costs contained within the report and the lack of benchmarking/comparison information. SO'D noted that the indicative costs were for information only and any future new build developments would be subject to formal procurement processes. The Board were reminded that they were being asked to approve the principles of a standard station design only. Any future new build developments and associated costs would be subject to separate approval by the Board.

14.6 The Board queried the aspirations of the Service for the digital connectivity and technical delivery on stations and SO'D confirmed that there was a standard specification for connectivity.

14.7 SO'D confirmed that the Service was continuing to engage with stakeholders to access potential funding streams within Scottish Government, Scottish Futures Trust, Local

## OFFICIAL

Authority community funding, etc as well as highlighting collaborative partnership to benefit the wider community.

- 14.8 The Board noted the potential opportunity for collaboration within the building industry to explore modular buildings for future new build stations as a way to standardise design and costings.
- 14.9 For clarification, the Board were reminded that they were being asked to approve the principles of the Standard Station Design only. The Board were not approving the estimate/final cost of the standard station design. Future individual costings for the procurement of a new station, if approved, would be fully benchmarked at the appropriate time.
- 14.10 **The Board approved the adoption of the principles of Standard Station Design.**

*(C Owens left the meeting at 1245 hrs)*

### **15 DEBT WRITE OFF**

- 15.1 SO'D presented a report to the Board seeking approval to request Scottish Government approval to write off debts of £2,280 owed by a supplier in liquidation.
- 15.2 The Board commented that the Service would continue to pursue potential recovery of monies which seemed contradictory. SO'D advised the Board that the Service would pursue recovery through the liquidation process, however for accounting purposes this would be written off.
- 15.3 **The Board approved the request to seek Scottish Government's approval to write off this debt.**

### **16 ANNUAL PROCUREMENT REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2019 – 31 MARCH 2020**

- 16.1 SO'D presented a report to the Board seeking approval for the Annual Procurement Report for the period 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020 noting the Service's requirement to prepare and publish under the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014. Following approval, the report would be published no later than 31 August 2020. It was highlighted that the Service achieved a score of 81% in the Procurement and Commercial Improvement Programme (PCIP) Assessment and the total value of Regulation Procurement was £48.5 million on 63 regulated procurements. Improvements were noted within the payment of suppliers (96% / 99% within 30 / 60 days respectively), delivery on sustainability duty and demonstrated community benefits.
- 16.2 The Board commended the efforts of the Procurement Team for their hard work and achievement within the last year.
- 16.3 SO'D confirmed that 46% of supplier base were assessed as SME's and noted that targets could not be set due to adhering to proper tendering processes. Approximately 36% (£27 million) of spend was with these suppliers. The savings and non cash efficiency savings noted within the report were generated through the Spikes Cavell database.
- 16.4 **The Board approved the Annual Procurement Report for the period 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020.**

### **17 RESOURCE BUDGET MONITORING – JULY 2020**

- 17.1 SO'D presented a report advising the Board of the resource budget position for the period ending 31 July 2020. SO'D outlined the analysis of the financial position and referred Members to Appendix A of the report, which identified the current resource

## OFFICIAL

position showing a forecast year-end underspend of £0.193 million. The forecast position includes anticipated costs for COP26 and net savings to date in respect of COVID-19. The Strategic Leadership Team had recently reviewed the budget position and approved the reallocation of £2.1 million as detailed within Appendix B.

17.2 SO'D noted that the reallocation of £2.1 million has been assigned to budget holders and further details would be provided in future reports. Options for potential spend to save opportunities were noted.

17.3 **The Board scrutinised the resource budget position for the period ending 31 July 2020.**

### **18 CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT 2020/21 – JULY 2020**

18.1 SO'D presented a report advising the Board of actual and committed expenditure against the 2020/21 capital budget for the period ending 31 July 2020. It was anticipated that the revised budget of £37.410 million would be spent by the end of the financial year with 62.5% already committed.

18.2 SO'D reminded the Board that an additional £4.35 million was received from Scottish Government, noting that this must be specifically spent on minor works. SO'D was unaware whether there were other recipients to benefit from additional monies.

18.3 It was agreed that an update on the Fire Museum would be provided at a future strategy Day (captured under Item 24).

18.4 **The Board scrutinised the level of actual and committed expenditure for the period ending 31 July 2020.**

*(The meeting broke at 1305 hrs and reconvened at 1315 hrs.)*

### **19 ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN 2019/20 QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT**

19.1 MMcA presented a report to the Board detailing the quarterly progress of the Annual Operating Plan 2019/20 and highlighted the following key points:

- Up to the end of June 2020, 34 actions have been completed, 18 actions have been closed and 9 actions remain live.

19.2 In regard to SO4:10, SO'D stated that COVID-19 had escalated work within business continuity plans and this would now be brought back in line with normal processes.

19.3 In regard to SO1.1, SS explained that a consistent approach across the UK for developing a risk rating process would ensure the consistent application of industry standards for audit purposes, enable benchmarking against other UK fire and rescue services and allow the Service to utilise resources within the NFCC.

19.4 **The Board noted the report.**

### **20 ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN 2020/21 QUARTER 1 PROGRESS REPORT**

20.1 MMcA presented a report to the Board noting that this was the first Consolidated Risk and Performance report and highlighted the following key points:

- Up to the end of June 2020, 26 actions were reporting Green and 24 actions were reporting Amber.
- Given the circumstances, the Service has continued to perform well.
- Due to a reporting error, the staff absence data was missing.
- Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) have been impacted by COVID-19 but the Service was continuing to focus on high risk visits. Online registration system introduced.
- Case conference convened following a spike in fire fatalities.
- *Make the Call* campaign was currently running to identify high risk individuals within

## OFFICIAL

local communities.

- 20.2 The Board asked whether there was any value in analysing the impact of the reduction in HFSVs over the current period and the potential impact of reducing future targets to allow more focus on higher risks. SS agreed that there was value in exploring quality over quantity, however, the current societal circumstances during lockdown were unique and difficult to benchmark against.
- 20.3 PSt noted that dwelling fire incidents had reduced, however, high severity dwelling fire incidents had increased. It has not been determined whether COVID-19 had a direct impact on these incidents. For information, SS noted that Fire Investigation processes had been amended to include a section on potential implications arising from COVID-19/lockdown.
- 20.4 The Board were updated on the capacity and development of the data team.
- 20.5 In regard to response times, the Board were reminded that due to the variations in geography and distribution of communities, a response standard had not been set. It was indicated that some narrative, to explain this reason, would be helpful.
- 20.6 The Board commented that using standardised commentary would be helpful to provide greater clarity.
- 20.7 MMcA confirmed that the performance indicators would be reviewed over the next 12-18 months, albeit with the awareness that the Fire Framework would be renewed next year and the potential impact of this. A session on performance indicators would be provided at a future strategy day.

20.8 **The Board noted the report.**

**21 REVISED ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN 2020/21**

- 21.1 MMcA presented the revised Annual Operating Plan 2020/21 report to the Board for information and highlighted the following:
- Action and milestones reviewed to take account of the impact of COVID-19.
  - Change Log process introduced to capture and report on changes within the plan.
  - Thirteen actions will span across a number of years and several milestones have been adjusted.
- 21.2 In regard to the potential revised UFAS strategy, SS noted that the timescale for implementing changes would be dependent on the outcome of the options appraisal, the level of engagement required, the potential challenge to proposals and the Command and Control Futures project.
- 21.3 SS noted that the recording of blue light journeys was possible, however, he did not have confidence in the data due to the numerous issues with the UFAS Recording System. The Board noted the difficulties with the system, however, it was felt that this information would help demonstrate the work being done to reduce blue light journeys.
- 21.4 MMcA stated that this 3-year plan was agile and the underpinning management processes would allow the Service to absorb additional work pressures.
- 21.5 MB updated the Board on the reason for the extended milestone date for the procurement of suitable Wildfire PPE and the work being undertaken.
- 21.6 As a result of the Accenture review, MB stated that resourcing within the Programme Management Office would need to be increased and this would be discussed further at the Accenture presentation on 3 September 2020.

21.7 **The Board noted the report.**

**22 SFRS LONG TERM STRATEGIC VISION: INTERNAL ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

22.1 MMcA presented a report to the Board providing high level detail on the engagement process proposing to be adopted to build a long term strategic vision for SFRS to help deliver change. He noted that it was the intention to have an open and honest conversation with staff on the development of the future vision, acknowledge previous concerns and further build on the purpose statement to achieve a shared consensus on the future vision.

22.2 It was agreed that Board Members would not be present as this may affect discussions/outcomes. A detailed report on the emerging themes would be provided after the events.

**ACTION: MMcA**

22.3 The Board commented on the overall tone of the plan (reaction rather than pro-active) and the need to use plain, non-managerial, language.

22.4 The Board were informed that the planned engagement events included Chief Officer lead sessions (x3) and external facilitated staff sessions (x10).

22.5 **The Board noted the report.**

**23 RISK THEMES**

23.1 None.

**24 FORWARD PLAN**

24.1 AC presented the Forward Plan noting that this would be kept under review and proposed agenda items would be prioritised due to the ongoing pandemic situation.

24.2 It was agreed that the Forward Plan and Strategy Day Programme would be updated to include:

- Update on Fire Museum and Performance Indicators (Strategy Day).

**ACTION: BST**

**25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

25.1 On behalf of the Board and to mark his last official Board meeting, the Chair formally thanked Sid Patten for his hard work and dedication throughout his 8-year tenure as a Board Member.

25.2 The next meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on Thursday 29 October 2020 at 1000 hrs.

25.3 There being no further matters to discuss in public, the meeting closed at 1407 hours.

**PRIVATE SESSION**

**9 CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT**

9.4 The Chair and Chief jointly highlighted the following:

- Meeting between Ash Denham, Minister of Community Safety, and the Fire Brigades Union.
- Update on discussions held with Fire Brigades Union.
- Future Fire Reform and subsequent implications for the Service.
- Meeting held to discuss the concerns on the tri-partite agreement.

**OFFICIAL**

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

**26 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PRIVATE MEETING: THURSDAY 25 JUNE 2020**

26.1 The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

**27 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW REPORT 2019/20**

27.1 MMcA presented a report to the Board seeking approval to release the Annual Performance Review Report 2019/20 to the Minister.

27.2 The Board discussed the report and requested several amendments be made.

27.3 **The Board approved the Annual Performance Review report, subject to agreed amendments.**