



SCOTTISH  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

## PUBLIC MEETING - SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

THURSDAY 30 APRIL 2020 @ 1000 HRS

### CONFERENCE FACILITIES

#### PRESENT:

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

Nick Barr (NB)  
Lesley Bloomer (LBI)  
Marieke Dwarshuis (MD)  
Sid Patten (SP)  
Primrose Stark (PS)  
Tim Wright (TW)

#### IN ATTENDANCE:

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
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
Hilary Sangster (HS)	Group Commander Business Support
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 those participating via video conference. The pre-meeting guidance and virtual meeting protocol was reiterated to the attendees.

#### 2 APOLOGIES

2.1 None

## **NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED**

- 3 CONSIDERATION OF AND DECISION ON ANY ITEMS TO BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE**
- 3.1 The Board agreed that the Response Strategy to UFAS – COVID-19 Pandemic and Authorisation for Settlement of Insurance Claim would be taken in private due to matters involving confidential natures (Standing Order 9G) and relating to an individual (Standing Order 9A). The Board agreed that a section of the Chair and Chief's reports 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 26 March 2020**
- 5.1.1 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.
- 5.1.2 To provide clarity of this meeting, it was agreed that the minutes should be amended to record the Board moving into private session and subsequently reverting back to public session.
- 5.2 Matters Arising
- 5.2.1 SO'D updated the Board on the cost and timescale of the Accenture work. Involvement of the Board was anticipated but was still to be confirmed and the report could be brought back to the Board in October 2020.
- 5.3 **The minutes of the meetings held on 26 March 2020 were approved as a true record of the meetings.**
- 6 ACTION LOG**
- 6.1 The Board considered the action log and noted the updates.
- 6.2 It was noted that the Grenfell Fire Final Report would be brought back in June 2021 and was recorded on the Forward Plan.
- 6.3 **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 26 March 2020, highlighting:
- Board Member's appraisals completed and common themes captured.
- The Board moved into private session at 1010 hrs to discuss confidential issues.**
- The Board moved back into public session at 1035 hrs.**
- 8.2 **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 26 March 2020, highlighting:

- Amendments were noted to the report including addition of a meeting with Minister for Community Safety, cancellation of the Reform Collaboration Group, NFCC Programme Board and Social Care meeting.

**The Board moved into private session at 1040 hrs to discuss confidential issues.**

**The Board moved back into public session at 1125 hrs.**

9.2 **The Board noted the report.**

**10 SERVICE TRANSFORMATION UPDATE**

10.1 RH updated Members in regard to Service Transformation which had occurred since the Board meeting held on 26 March 2020, highlighting the following:

- Change to Strategic Leadership Team reference. ACO Paul Stewart has taken over Director of Service Development and discussions have taken place on roles, responsibilities and how to move the Change Portfolio forward.
- RH to remain the Senior Responsible Officer. PSt responsible for the Portfolio Office and Service Delivery Model Programme teams.
- Reviewing arrangements to strengthen the role of the Senior Management Team.
- Items discussed at the last Programme Office meeting (March 2020) included Gateway Review Report and Action Plan, TMP dashboard and risk register.
- TMPC Pre-agenda meeting (27 March 2020) held, noting that an updated dashboard, which included direct/indirect delays to projects due to COVID-19, would be presented at the full Committee meeting.

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 25 March 2020 and referred the Board to the attached draft minutes noting that a verbal update was provided at the previous Board meeting.

11.1.2 **The Board noted the draft minutes.**

**11.2 Service Delivery Committee (SDC)**

11.2.1 NB reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 12 March 2020 and referred the Board to the attached draft minutes noting that a verbal update was provided at the previous Board meeting.

11.2.2 The Board asked for clarification on the development of policies for managing the transition from “stay put” to “get out” for certain premises (ref para 8.2.2). RH stated that there was no change in the approach to “stay put”. He noted that there were specific arrangements in place for a small number of known premises for immediate evacuation. The work being undertaken related to how the Service would operationally manage and communicate the real-time transition from “stay put” to “get out” at a live incident. *(Due to technical difficulties during the meeting, it was agreed that RH would circulate a brief note to the Board to reiterate his response.)*

11.2.3 In relation to the Grenfell Fire, RH informed the Board that the Service was taking cognisance of all recommendations from the Public Inquiry and London Fire Brigade Investigation Report. There was no statutory timescale allocated to these actions and the Service was confident that all actions would be addressed by June 2021.

**NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED**

11.2.4 **The Board noted the draft minutes.**

11.3 **Staff Governance Committee (SGC)**

11.3.1 PS reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 5 March 2020 and referred the Board to the attached draft minutes noting that a verbal update was provided at the previous Board meeting.

11.3.2 PS informed the Board of the delay in progressing the RDS Terms and Conditions to a Resolution Advisory Panel meeting, due to COVID-19. The option to hold the meeting virtually was still to be explored.

11.3.3 **The Board noted the draft minutes.**

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

11.4.1 FT reported that the Committee's next meeting was scheduled for 7 May 2020.

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

11.5 **Integrated Governance Committee (IGC)**

11.5.1 KD reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 25 March 2020 and referred the Board to the attached draft minutes noting that a verbal update was provided at the previous Board meeting.

11.5.2 For clarification, the Chair advised that BB, MB, SO'D were to discuss the service transformation plan and request Internal Audit to undertake work to identify any gaps and if necessary that information will feed into the Internal Audit plan going forward.

11.5.3 **The Board noted the draft minutes.**

*The meeting broke at 1150 hrs and reconvened at 1155 hrs.*

**12 AMENDED ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN 2020/21**

12.1 MMcA presented a paper to the Board seeking approval for the amended Annual Operating Plan (AOP) 2020/21, noting the following key points:

- Removal of 13 actions considered to be business as usual.
- Impact of COVID-19 affecting 60% of actions.
- Continue to monitor SLT/SMT and provide updates quarterly to the Board.

12.2 MMcA confirmed that Directorates applied consistent criteria for actions remaining and milestones had been delayed due to inability to conduct face to face meetings. This would be continuously monitored and reviewed. The Board asked for a further review to be undertaken to reflect on the delay being due to availability of staff. It was agreed that the AOP would be brought back to the next meeting for scrutiny.

**ACTION: MMcA**

12.3 In relation to SO1 Action 6, RH stated that the outstanding recommendation from the HMFSI inspection involved publishing information on how the Service undertake risk rating for relevant premises under the Fire Scotland Act. These actions require changes by ICT and do not directly impact on the HMFSI recommendations as these can still be progressed.

12.4 In relation to SO2 Action 2, the business case for identifying and securing equipment and vehicles for wildfire responses was not being progressed at this time. However, the Board were given assurances that there were no concerns relating to the current provision or availability of PPE.

12.5 **The Board approved the Amended Annual Operating Plan 2020/21.**

- 13 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW OF BOARD AND COMMITTEE RELATED ITEMS**
- 13.1 MMcA presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the annual governance review, thereby ensuring the continued effectiveness of the governance arrangements and highlighted the following key areas:
- Changes to report classification.
  - Integrated Governance Committee to become a Forum.
  - Remuneration, Appointments and Nominations Sub-Committee to be added to list of Standing Committees.
  - Changes made to reflect restructure of Strategic Leadership Team.
  - Members Code of Conduct review on hold due to the ongoing Standards Commission's review of the Model Code of Conduct for members of devolved public bodies.
- 13.2 The Board were informed that MD and BMcQ have been granted a 9 month extension to 23 July 2021, due to the suspension of public appointments during the current COVID-19 pandemic.
- 13.3 The Board discussed paragraph 6.19 Health and Safety within the Scheme of Delegations and suggested that the wording be amended to clarify that the Board were delegating the operational delivery and not their responsibility for health and safety.
- ACTION: MMcA/BST**
- 13.4 Following a discussion on virements, the Board agreed to move forward and note the position. Should there be any issues or concerns about the level of virement effectively distorting the strategic objectives, the Board would reconsider the position.
- 13.5 **The Board approved the Annual Governance Review of Board and Committee Related Items.**
- 14 SFRS GOVERNANCE INFORMATION RELATED TO COVID-19**
- 14.1 MMcA presented a report to the Board providing an overview of the SFRS governance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as discussed and agreed at the previous Board meeting.
- 14.2 The option to livestream public Board meetings had been investigated and it was recommended that it would not be appropriate to introduce this function at this time. Public Board papers and minutes were continuing to be published on the SFRS website.
- 14.3 In relation to RDS training, JD confirmed that training procedures have been amended to allow flexibility to reinstate training on a risk based local arrangement. LCMS online training modules remain available for personnel to use.
- 14.4 **The Board noted the report.**
- 15 FORWARD PLANNING AND RECOVERY GROUP FRAMEWORK**
- 15.1 PSt presented a report to the Board providing details of the Framework developed to inform the operation of the SFRS Forward Planning and Recovery Group (FPRG) and highlighted the following key points:
- Flexibility of the framework and alignment with the strategic objectives.
  - Phased approach – Response, Recovery and Renew.
  - Resetting the Service to new normality.
  - Engaged Police Scotland and Scottish Government.
- 15.2 **The Board noted the report and the SFRS Gold Group's approval for the FPRG Framework Document.**

**16 COVID-19 – STAFF WELLBEING**

16.1 LBa provided a verbal update on the recently convened Staff Wellbeing Group and noted that the terms of reference and framework document had been agreed. The membership of the Group comprised cross directorate personnel, trade union representatives and Gill Morton, Rivers Centre.

16.2 The Group's 3 key priorities were focussing on financial support, bereavement and increased alcohol dependence with the recognition of other long term addiction issues. Engaged with mental health agencies, Samaritans, etc. Recognition of relationship issues (families, isolation and neighbourhood challenges). Monitoring of self-referrals to identify themes. Opportunity for Mental Health First Aiders to support with the helpline was being explored. Training packages were being developed for Managers to help identify and support staff.

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

*The meeting broke at 1250 hrs and reconvened at 1255 hrs.*

**17 ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN Q3 PROGRESS REPORT**

17.1 MMcA presented a report to the Board detailing the Q3 quarterly progress of the Annual Operating Plan 2019/20 and highlighted the following key points:

- 41 Green actions, 18 Amber actions and 2 Red actions.
- Review of any potential impact of COVID-19 affecting Quarter 4.

17.2 **The Board noted the quarterly report and progress made against the Annual Operating Plan 2019/20.**

**18 BOARD SUMMARY PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR Q3 2019-20**

18.1 MMcA presented a report to the Board providing the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter Summary Performance Report for fiscal year 2019-20 and highlighted the following key points:

- Fire Fatalities lowest annual figures since the inception of the Service (2013).
- Information Requests (GRS1.10) – Reporting below target primarily due to the increased number of complex requests. New handling procedures implemented to ensure statutory timescales are being met. Annual report to be presented to the Service Delivery Committee (September 2020).
- Significant improvements highlighted within KPI 3-year Average Trend Comparison table.

18.2 MMcA confirmed that InPhase would be implemented and reporting from Quarter 1 2020/21.

18.3 In relation to WD3 (Training for Operational Competence), the Board sought clarification on the figure (%) and what actions required to be taken. JD explained that the figure was broad ranging and difficult to interpret as it included Wholetime/RDS/VDS. The intention would be to disaggregate this figure going forward. He noted that the original competence framework was designed for the previous 4 watch duty system so this also impacts on the figures. He further noted the connectivity issues within some rural areas.

18.4 JD stated that some training had been deferred due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation. However, the decision was made to maintain 4 key competency areas: trainees, driver training, breathing apparatus and incident command along with re-integration training for day duty/formal employees. LCMS packages were available and the use of dynamic assessments and risk assessments on a localised basis to carry out training that they can still undertake.

## **NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED**

- 18.5 SO'D noted the work undertaken to counteract incidents and confirmed that there had been no cyber security breaches to date.
- 18.6 **The Board noted the report.**
- 19 REVIEW OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT**
- 19.1 MMcA presented a report to the Board providing details of the outcome of the review of Internal Communications and Engagement within the Service and highlighted the following key points.
- Summary of key findings of the review.
  - Principles for internal communications and engagement including how the Service measures the effectiveness (impact).
  - Detailed improvement action plan which includes quick wins, short, medium and long-term actions.
  - SFRS Strategy for Communications and Engagement would be reviewed this year.
  - Progress against the action plan/strategy would be reported to the Board.
- 19.2 The Chair noted the comments submitted from the Board. These related to the role of the Board, continuing station visits and closing the loop on feedback received, and proposed timescales given the current situation.
- 19.3 The Board noted the success of the Chief's weekly 'live' broadcast and their effectiveness.
- 19.4 MMcA stated that a working group has been convened to review and redesign the iHub and the requirement to rebalance the communications and engagement team.
- 19.5 MMcA noted the importance of good communications across the Service. The Consultation Institute's communications and engagement skills training arranged for March/April 2020 had been postponed and would be rescheduled at an appropriate time.
- 19.6 MMcA informed the Board of the private social media groups created for employees to use for work and social aspects.
- 19.7 **The Board noted the report and the 3 year action plan and commended the work undertaken by the team.**
- 20 BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE REVIEW**
- 20.1 MMcA presented a report to the Board providing details of the current position, development and suggested improvements in the use and development of Business Intelligence within the Service. The following key points were highlighted:
- Review looked at approach, current capabilities and skill sets.
  - Reviewed the range of products produced.
  - Building on strategic/management information.
  - Supporting Digital Strategy and systems integrations.
  - Discussions with partners including NHS Information Services Division, Local Government, etc. to gain their knowledge/insight.
  - Sub group of Digital Steering Group to be convened to develop a 4-year strategy and action plan which would be brought back to the Board in due course.
- 20.2 MMcA confirmed that Scottish Government have named the Service as Publisher of Official Statistics and stated that the Service was already adhering to the appropriate standards and protocols required.
- 20.3 **The Board noted the report.**

**21 END OF YEAR CAPITAL POSITION 2019/20**

21.1 SO'D provided a verbal update to the Board noting work was ongoing to prepare the annual report and accounts. In relation to the end of year Capital position, the Service, with an underspend of £2,000, achieved a full spend.

21.2 **The Board noted the verbal report and congratulated SO'D and her team for achieving this position.**

**22 RISK THEMES**

22.1 The Board commented on the undernoted issues:

- Additional spend on COVID-19 - SO'D confirmed that an update would be provided within the Budget Monitoring reports and noted the approximate spend to date.
- Resilience for Key Support Staff – MMCA confirmed that appropriate measures were being taken to increase skill sets within certain teams to ensure resilience for key support staff.
- Industrial relations (NFCC/NJC)

**23 FORWARD PLAN**

23.1 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.

It was agreed that the Forward Plan would be updated to include:

- Annual Operating Plan 2020/21 – June 2020
- Grenfell Fire Final Report – June 2021

**ACTION: BST**

**24 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

24.1 The next meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on Thursday 25 June 2020 at 1000 hrs.

24.2 There being no further matters to discuss in public, the meeting closed at 1340 hours.

**PRIVATE SESSION**

**8 CHAIR'S REPORT**

8.3 The Chair highlighted the following:

- Consideration by Scottish Government's Sponsorship Unit, Public Appointments Unit and the Minister for Community Safety to furlough Board Members.
- Outlined issues discussed via teleconference meeting with Ash Denham, Minister for Community Safety took place (29 April 2020).
- Circulation of information including CRIP, Chief Officer briefing and Chief's broadcast and support available were helpful and informative. Strategy sessions to be planned to allow discussion/scrutiny on strategic implications and future service development.
- Tripartite Agreement and response letters to both the NJC and NFCC Chairs.

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

**9 CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT**

9.3 The Chief Officer referred the Board to the COVID-19 Briefing Note circulated previously and highlighted the following:

- Acknowledgement of all Service personnel on their response to COVID-19 pandemic.
- Outline of Strategic Intentions.

**NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED**

- Summary of SFRS Response to COVID-19.
- Appliance Availability and Operational Incidents.
- Activity in Support of COVID-19 Response.
- Representative Body Engagement
- Recovery and Forward Look
- Communications and Staff Engagement.

9.4

**The Board noted the verbal update.**

**25**

**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PRIVATE MEETING: 26 MARCH 2020**

25.1

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

**26**

**AUTHORISATION FOR SETTLEMENT OF INSURANCE CLAIM**

26.1

SO'D presented a report to the Board seeking formal approval to negotiate settlement of an Employer's Liability Claim raised against the Service, noting the early circulation (via email).

26.2

**The Board formally approved the recommendations.**

**27**

**RESPONSE STRATEGY TO UFAS – COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

27.1

SS presented a report to the Board detailing the strategy for responding to Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA) during the COVID-19 pandemic. He outlined the 3 options considered by the Gold Group and the rationale for their decision which would be subject to a full evaluation through the recovery work. The Fire Brigades Union had been engaged and were supportive of this approach.

27.2

The Board were supportive of this approach, noting the Service would continue to explore further options with the knowledge that updates would be brought back on any future changes.

27.3

**The Board noted the report and the decision to adopt Option 1 for responding to AFA actuations, with effect from 1 May 2020.**