



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

PUBLIC SPECIAL MEETING – SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

THURSDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2020 @ 0930 HRS

**BRAIDWOOD SUITE, SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS,
WESTBURN DRIVE, CAMBUSLANG, G72 7NA**

PRESENT:

Kirsty Darwent (Chair) (KD)
Nick Barr (NB)
Marieke Dwarshuis (MD)
Sid Patten (SP)
Primrose Stark (PS)
Mhairi Wylie (MW) (Via Skype)

Brian Baverstock (BB)
Anne Buchanan (AB)
Bill McQueen (BMcQ)
Malcolm Payton (MP)
Fiona Thorburn (FT)
Tim Wright (TW)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Martin Blunden (MB)	Chief Officer
David McGown (DMcG)	Deputy 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
Ross Haggart (RH)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Prevention and Protection
Paul Stewart (PS)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Training
Stuart Stevens (SS)	Deputy Assistant Chief Officer, Strategic Planning and Performance
Alasdair Cameron (AC)	Group Commander Board Support
Debbie Haddow (DJH)	Board Support/Minutes

1 CHAIR'S WELCOME

1.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all those present.

2 APOLOGIES

2.1 Lesley Bloomer, Board Member
John Dickie, Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Response and Resilience

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

3.1 No private items were identified.

4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

4.1 None

5 BUDGET STRATEGY 2020/21

5.1 SO'D presented a report to the Board seeking their approval for the 2020/21 Budget Strategy, noting the delay in presenting the budget and the budget allocation from Scottish Government. SO'D highlighted the following key areas:

- Scottish Government's support for the proposal to broaden the role of firefighters, however the current budget does not support the current pay offer.
- Work continuing to develop a UK-wide Emergency Service Network through the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP).
- Assumptions in relation to COP 26 and Brexit.
- Accounting standard International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS) 16 leases and subsequent reclassification of some costs between resource and capital budgets.
- Support staff pay - 3% increase on 1 April 2020.
- Uniformed staff pay – Pending outcome on pay offer, provision has been made for a 1.9% increase as per regular NJC arrangements. Acceptance of the pay deal would result in an estimated increase of £11.3 million in financial year 2020/21.
- Inflation for utilities has been based on projected Consumer Price Index (CPI).
- 3-year Capital Programme will be refreshed and rolled forward to cover 2020-2023 with firm proposals for 2020/21.
- Challenges with “flat cash” funding, asset investment backlog and replacement of Reinforced Aerated Autoclaved Concrete (RAAC) roof panels were noted.
- Significant investigation work to support the reduction of carbon emissions.
- Continuing to explore asset sharing opportunities.
- Future capital receipts were anticipated for Maddiston and Thornton and the expectation was that this would be retained by the Service.

5.2 The Board asked whether there was any additional provision within the budget for environmental spend. SO'D noted that a detailed presentation would be delivered at the Board Strategy Day directly after this meeting. A Carbon Management Plan was being developed and would include details of investments required to achieve the 30% reduction. It was noted property projects and fleet investment would build in environmental improvements. It was acknowledged that additional investment would be required in this area.

5.3 The Board commented on pay increases for both Support and Uniformed staff. SO'D confirmed that should the pay offer be rejected; Uniformed staff would return to the NJC arrangements for which budget provision has been made, based on current estimates of standard inflation e.g 1.9%. It was noted that should the pay offer be accepted the Service would continue discussions with Scottish Government to secure additional funds required.

5.4 The Board questioned whether the Service had previously been reimbursed for additional costs incurred by major events such as COP 26. SO'D confirmed that the Service was reimbursed for additional services provided during the Commonwealth Games. In relation to COP 26, the Service was accurately recording and evidencing costs incurred to enable recovery. MB has written to Scottish Government to confirm the Service's arrangements and understanding of the provision for COP 26.

5.5 In relation to “flat cash” the Board enquired if this was sufficient or were efficiencies required, what the high-risk assumption was and what the contingencies were.

- 5.6 SO'D stated that the level of resource funding was challenging, however, the Service would be able to present a balanced budget to the Board at its March meeting.. The Service would have to consider options through making decisions to progress transformation with efficiencies made if required. It was noted that due to the ongoing negotiations, the anticipated spend/savings on transformation had not been achieved. SO'D stated that the biggest financial risk was in relation to employee costs.

- 5.7 **The Board approved the Budget Strategy 2020/21.**

6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 6.1 The next meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on Thursday 26 March 2020 at 1000 hrs at Bo'ness Town Hall, Glebe Park, Stewart Avenue, Bo'ness EH51 9NJ.
- 6.2 There being no further matters to discuss in public, the meeting closed at 0955 hrs.