



SCOTTISH  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE  
Working together for a safer Scotland

**SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE BOARD**

**THURSDAY 26 MARCH 2020 @ 1000 HRS**

**TELECONFERENCE**

**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   |
| David McGown (DMcG)    | Deputy 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 Command Business Support                                      |
| Alasdair Cameron (AC)  | Group Commander Board Support                                       |
| Debbie Hadow (DH)      | Board Support/Minutes   |

**OBSERVERS:**

None

**1 CHAIR'S WELCOME**

1.1 KD opened the meeting and welcomed those present and those participating via teleconference. The recently circulated 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 Chief Officer's report on *COVID-19* would be taken in private due to matters involving national security (Standing Order 9C).

3.2 No further private items were identified.

**4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

4.1 None

**5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:**

**5.1 Thursday 12 December 2019**

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

5.1.2 Matters Arising

The "2019 Round Up" of notable events, awards, etc had not yet been finalised and would be circulated in due course.

**ACTION: MB**

5.1.3 MB informed the Board that the Digital Strategy Consultancy had been awarded to Accenture. The scope of the review to reflect on our capability of achieving our vision by assessing if the appropriate organisational drivers and enablers of change are in place. It is anticipated that this review will include the following broad areas:

- Organisational structure
- Processes, practices and governance
- Use of digital technology and data
- Resource planning
- Skills and capacity for change

**5.2 Thursday 27 February 2020 (Special)**

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

5.3 **The minutes of the meetings held on 12 December 2019 and 27 February 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 **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.**

**18 SUSPENSION OF PUBLIC ACCESS TO SFRS BOARD PUBLIC MEETINGS**

18. In order to formally record the decision, RW presented a report to the Board, which had been circulated and approved by email, seeking confirmation of approval to suspend public access to all SFRS Board/Committee meetings as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

18.2 It was noted that alternative platforms for hosting meetings was being explored.

18.3 **The Board reiterated their approval of the decision to suspend public access to SFRS Board public meeting in the interest of public safety**

**8 CHAIR'S REPORT**

8.1 The Chair presented her report noting events which had occurred since the Board meeting held on 12 December 2019, highlighting:

- Amendment to written report as a result of the cancellation (withdrawal) of Employers Tribunal.
- Consideration was being given to platforms for virtual meetings (Microsoft Teams) and an update on proposed communication would be provided within the Chief Officer's Report (agenda item 9).
- Option to hold virtual National Joint Council (NJC) Resolution Advisory Panel meeting re Retained Duty System terms and conditions was offered.
- Sadly, the Cheapside Memorial Event has been formally cancelled and individual Service wreaths will be laid throughout the day by Service personnel.

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 12 December 2019, highlighting:

- Accelerated Implementation of promotion/re-structure within Strategic Leadership Team due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Franklin Covey work (13 January) refers to the preparation work undertaken for leadership development days.
- Engagement events throughout January and February 2020 which included a live skype call with RDS personnel.

9.2 The Board complimented the Chief on the recent live Chief Officer's Broadcast to all staff in response to COVID-19. MB stated that he had received positive feedback with staff appreciating the opportunity to ask questions. Weekly broadcasts were scheduled and both the Sharepoint site and iHub pages would be updated regularly.

9.3 **The Board noted the report.**

**THE BOARD MOVED INTO PRIVATE SESSION AT 1030 HRS TO DISCUSS THE SERVICE'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.**

**THE BOARD MOVED BACK INTO PUBLIC SESSION AT 1130 HRS.**

**10 SERVICE TRANSFORMATION UPDATE**

10.1 DMcG updated Members in regard to Service Transformation which had occurred since the Board meeting held on 27 February 2020, highlighting the following:

- Gateway Review concluded and report received with 7 recommendations.
- All recommendations have been accepted.
- Action Plan developed and returned to Scottish Government's Portfolio, Programme and Project Assurance Team, and subsequently accepted. Due to the escalating pandemic, there will now be a caveat for possible delay in delivery.
- Formal governance and reporting of Gateway Review and Action Plan will be via the Senior Management Team, Strategic Leadership Team, Transformation and Major Projects Committee and SFRS Board.

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

*The meeting broke at 1140 hrs and reconvened at 1150 hrs.*

**11 COMMITTEE UPDATES**

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

11.1.1 BB reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 16 January 2020 and referred the Board to the attached draft minutes.

11.1.2 BB reported that a further meeting of the Committee was held on 25 March 2020 and provided a verbal update, highlighting the following:

- Completion of 2019/20 Internal Audit Plan confirmed with overall opinion of Reasonable Assurance.
- Final Internal Audit reports for Payroll – Update given on measures implemented relating to RDS records (payment).
- Update on changes to Strategic Risk Register and concerns were noted over the ability to effect appropriate scrutiny during this change process.
- Demonstration on development of Risk Management with InPhase.
- Discussion re non procurement expenditure and measures being taken to reduce this.
- Final Internal Audit Reports for Risk Management and Fraud Risk Management.
- Draft Internal Audit Plan for 2020/21 from Scott-Moncrieff.

11.1.3 Final Internal Audit report for Performance Management to be circulated to provide clarification on recommendations.

**ACTION: BST**

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

**11.2 Service Delivery Committee (SDC)**

11.2.1 NB reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 10 December 2019 and referred the Board to the attached approved minutes.

NB reported that a further meeting of the Committee was held on 12 March 2020 (briefing note circulated) and provided a verbal update, highlighting the following:

- Operational Learning – Operational Assurance Board and Frontline updates.
- Quarterly Update on Grenfell Action Plan
  - Comprehensive Action Plan developed to include all 46 recommendations (Public Inquiry) and 13 recommendations (London Fire Brigade).
  - Cross Directorate Working Group convened.
  - Quarterly update to be provided at the Committee and subsequently reported back into the Board.
- Risk spotlight on COP 26 and COVID-19.
- Quarterly Performance Report Q3.
- Internal review on how audit report/inspection are progressed with the Service. Proposal to dispose Performance Improvement Forum (PIF) with direct reporting into Senior Management Team.
- Closing report for Overview of Scottish Fire and Rescue Service May 2013.
- Presentation and overview of Highlands areas from LSO Rab Middlemiss which included a specific look at Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS).
- Update on UFAS project mainstreaming best practice, reviewing policy and procedures and establishment of UFAS working group.
- Update from HMFSI.

11.2.2

MMcA agreed to circulate brief (by email) on the changes to the governance process around the production of action plans as a result of inspection/audit reports. Information on the procedure for collating national themes emerging from HMFSI inspection would also be included in the brief.

**ACTION: MMcA**

## **NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED**

- 11.2.3 It was requested that a final report for Grenfell would be brought back to the Board, at the appropriate time, for their consideration.
- 11.2.4 **The Board noted the approved minutes and verbal update.**
- 11.3 **Staff Governance Committee (SGC)**
- 11.3.1 PS reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 5 December 2019 and referred the Board to the attached approved minutes.
- 11.3.2 PS reported that a further meeting of the Committee was held on 5 March 2020 and provided a verbal update, highlighting the following:
- Outlined new format for Performance report which ties in with priorities within the Strategic Plan. Further changes to the format were anticipated due to the structural changes within the Strategic Leadership Team.
  - Development of 5-year recruitment and promotion schedule.
  - Leadership for Change nominations cover all functions of the Service.
  - Employee Recognition Scheme approved and being implemented.
  - Improved rates of fitness assessment compliance and medical assessment attendance.
  - Contract for Post incident support has been awarded and commenced.
  - Update on Training Review.
  - Update on Health and Safety Improvement Plans.
  - Risks – Standardisation of RDS Terms and Conditions moving toward resolved through NJC and Standardisation of Training and Employee Development Instructor Working Arrangements.
- 11.3.3 **The Board noted the approved minutes and verbal update.**
- 11.4 **Transformation and Major Projects Committee (TMPC)**
- 11.4.1 FT reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 6 February 2020 and referred the Board to the attached draft minutes. She highlighted the following:
- Gateway Review (previously discussed).
  - Focus on exception reporting at next meeting (7 May 2020).
  - Focus on impact of ongoing pandemic at the next meeting (7 May 2020).
- 11.4.2 It was confirmed that the Rapid Response Unit Evaluation report was being finalised and would be submitted to the TMPC meeting in August 2020.
- 11.4.3 **The Board noted the draft minutes and verbal update.**
- 11.5 **Integrated Governance Committee (IGC)**
- 11.5.1 KD reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 16 January 2020 and referred the Board to the attached draft minutes.
- 11.5.2 KD reported that a further meeting of the Committee was held on 25 March 2020 and provided a verbal update, highlighting the following issues
- Recommendation to change the Committee to a Forum to be submitted to the next Board meeting (30 April 2020).
  - Review of good governance and compliance and identifying the best forum to scrutinise.
  - Further background work to be undertaken in regard to the Audit Plan and Gateway Review.
- 11.5.3 **The Board noted the draft minutes and verbal update.**

**12 RESOURCE BUDGET 2020/21**

- 12.1 SO'D presented a paper to the Board seeking approval of the proposed Resource Budget for 2020/21, noting that the Strategic Leadership Team has aligned the cost base to the budget provided by Scottish Government, no provision had been made for COVID-19 and as such any costs will be collated separately.
- 12.2 SO'D provided clarification and breakdown on the increases within supplies and services expenditure.
- 12.3 SO'D confirmed that the CCF project was budgeted within the 2020/21 and 2021/22 capital budget, however, there were some resource budget implications due to maintaining existing systems.
- 12.4 SO'D confirmed that *strengthening the resilience around crewing models* related to bolstering the overtime budget in line with current focus. *Additional support to deliver service transformation and development* related to the Service Delivery Model project team and other support posts.
- 12.5 SO'D informed the Board that she was unable to predict the cost of COVID-19 however, outlined some of the additional elements such as overtime, potential re-engagement of former employees, procuring of PPE, etc. These costs would be collated separately and reported regularly to Scottish Government.
- 12.6 **The Board approved the Resource Budget 2020/21.**

**13 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2020-2023**

- 13.1 SO'D presented a report to the Board seeking endorsement of the proposed Capital Programme 2020-2023 and highlighted the following key areas:
- Links with Asset Management Strategy, working on standard station design, investments in both environmental and ICT.
  - Anticipated £99 million over 3 years, with Year One funding confirmed and assumption of consistent funding for Years 2 and 3.
  - Continue to request additional fund from Scottish Government.
  - Bids being prepared to access funds for environmental areas.
- 13.2 SO'D advised the Board that the standard station design would prioritise dignified facilities for all personnel. Once the standard station design has been confirmed, the intention is to reassess the property backlog investment. It is unclear at this time how the projected £99 million capital spend will impact on the historical capital investment shortfall. Consideration could be given to indicators relating to the suitability of facilities in the future.
- 13.3 LB stated that facilities did not constrain deployment and the Service were addressing the employee relations issues raised.
- 13.4 The Board asked whether there were any financial recovery options for replacement of RAAC panels. SO'D noted there were some costs within the resource budget to maintain the temporary measures currently in place. Longer term capital investment would take cognisance of the outcomes of the Service Delivery Model project and other replacement/refurbishment factors.
- 13.5 SO'D confirmed that discussions to secure additional funding were ongoing with Scottish Government. She reminded the Board that Scottish Government were investing in responding to climate emergency, partnership working and digital connectivity and the Service were developing bids to address these priorities.



## NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

13.6 The Board discussed whether there was further action/support could be taken in regard to the financial shortfall in property investment. It was noted that Scottish Government were made aware and reminded of the financial shortfall through the Chief and Chair's meetings with the Minister, Cabinet Secretary and Justice Committee. The potential to raise public awareness, of the situation, through media and public annual review was briefly discussed.

13.7 **The Board approved the Capital Programme 2020-2023.**

*(MW left the meeting at 1300 hrs)*

### 14 **DRAFT ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN 2020-21**

14.1 MMcA presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the draft Annual Operating Plan (AOP) 2020/21, noting that this was the first year of a 3 year programme of work. However, due to the escalating COVID-19 pandemic, an amended reduced version would be brought back to the next Board meeting (30 April 2020).

14.2 The following issues were noted/discussed:

- SO1 Action 7 – It was suggested that the text “*to ensure compliance*” be amended.
- SO3 Action 13 – It was confirmed that all actions from the TED Review would be considered with appropriate governance being undertaken.
- Reference or cognisance of previous work undertaken was not obvious within the plan.
- How the AOP relates to Performance Management Framework, specifically self-assessments/process review and subsequent recording of activities.
- SO1 Action 1 – Review of UFAS undertaken with the view to implement improvements, review policy and implement. Appropriate to review policy and review strategy, if necessary.
- SO2 Action 4 – Referred to UK wide and updates will be provided through business as usual.
- Previously agreed to keep Transformation Programme separate, mapping and overlay to AOP was being conducted with the option to report back to a future Strategy Day.
- Appropriateness of the AOP being reported direct to the Board.
- Transformation Programme would continue to be scrutinised by the Transformation and Major Projects Committee and would be reported during the Committee updates at the start of the Board meeting.

14.3 **The Board approved the Draft Annual Operating Plan 2020-21 and that the revised Plan is brought back to the next meeting.**

### 15 **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**

15.1 MMcA presented a report to the Board seeking approval for the revised Performance Management Framework (PMF) 2020. The Performance Improvement Group would continue to evolve the Service's approach to performance management indicators, etc. Implementation and readiness of InPhase system has been a priority.

15.2 It was noted that the PMF was operationally effective, however, it was generally acknowledged that there was further development required to allow for strategic oversight. When appropriate further discussions relating to KPI's would be held with Board Members.

15.3 MMcA to review the accuracy of the hierarchy of reporting diagram and review the Boards role in regard to performance improvement/robust scrutiny (Objective 4.4).

15.4 **The Board approve the revised Performance Management Framework.**

**NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED**

**16 RESOURCE BUDGET MONITORING – FEBRUARY 2020**

- 16.1 SO'D presented a report advising the Board of the resource budget position for the period ending 29 February 2020. SO'D outlined the analysis of the financial position and referred Members to Appendix A of the report, which identified the current resource position showing a forecast year-end underspend of £1.978million. The reasons for this underspend were outlined as rejection of pay offer, delivery of smoke detectors impacted by COVID-19. Further impact due to COVID-19 was anticipated and work would continue to maximise the spend against the available budget. Appendix B provided an explanation of the current significant variances relative to the budget.
- 16.2 The Board sought clarification on the impact on operational resilience due to the underspend on driver training and the income generated from Scottish Ambulance Service. SO'D confirmed that the income generated from SAS was due to increased sharing of facilities. PSt confirmed that the driver training was being managed with limited impact on operations.
- 16.3 SO'D advised the Board that the Service would not be permitted to retain the underspend.
- 16.4 **The Board noted the resource budget position for the period ending February 2020.**

**17 CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT – FEBRUARY 2020**

- 17.1 SO'D presented a report advising the Board of actual and committed expenditure against the 2019/20 capital budget for the period ending 29 February 2020. It was anticipated that the revised budget of £32.563million would be spent by the end of the financial year.
- 17.2 SO'D informed the Board that work had already commenced on 2020/2021 projects and alternative options would be considered/explored to counteract any impact from COVID-19.
- 17.3 **The Board noted the level of actual and committed expenditure for the period ending February 2020.**

**19 RISK THEMES**

- 19.1 COVID-19 which was discussed throughout the meeting.

**20 FORWARD PLAN**

- 20.1 AC presented the Forward Plan noting that this would be kept under review and proposed agenda items would be prioritised due to the escalating national situation.

It was agreed that a COVID-19 update and the Revised Annual Operating Plan would be added to the Forward Plan for the April meeting.

**ACTION: BST**

**21 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 21.1 The next meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on Thursday 30 April 2020 at 1000 hrs.
- 21.2 On behalf of the Board, the Chaired thanks DCO McGown for his hard work, support and exemplary leadership since the inception of the Service and wished him well for his retirement.
- 21.3 There being no further matters to discuss in public, the meeting closed at 1345 hours.



**PRIVATE SESSION**

**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:

- Response and Resilience Business Continuity Arrangement stood up.
- Preparatory pro-active work undertaken.
- Early promotion and remit changes within Strategic Leadership Team.
- SFRS Strategic Intentions set by Gold Command Group and actioned by the Tactical Action Group.
- Production of Common Recognised Information Picture (CRIP) which also feeds into Scottish Government CRIP and presented at the Scottish Government Resilience meeting.
- Operations Controls - Island sites to protect personnel.
- All office based staff, who can, were working from home. The minimal non-operational staff still on site were observing social distancing.
- Details of communication and engagement with staff.
- Discussions ongoing with other emergency services to identify what, if any, assistance can be provided.
- Re-engagement of Firefighters and Operational Control personnel being investigated.
- Review of the Appliance Withdrawal Strategy.
- Future recovery from executive decisions and revised delegated authority proposed.

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

**22 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PRIVATE MEETING: 12 DECEMBER 2019**

22.1 The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

**23 COP 26**

23.1 JD referred the Board to the COP 26 briefing which had been previously circulated within the Service Delivery Committee meeting papers (12 March 2020). At present, COP 26 was still scheduled to be held in Glasgow during November 2020 and preparation work was continuing.

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