



**SCOTTISH**  
**FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Working together for a safer Scotland

**PUBLIC MEETING – PEOPLE COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY 2 JUNE 2021 @ 1300 HOURS**

**BY CONFERENCE FACILITIES**

**PRESENT:**

Primrose Stark (Chair) (PS)  
Bill McQueen (BMcQ)

Anne Buchanan (Deputy Chair) (AB)  
Malcolm Payton (MP)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Liz Barnes (LB)	Director of People and Organisational Development
John Dickie (JD)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Training, Safety and Assurance
Stuart Stevens (SSt)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Service Delivery
Scott Semple (SSe)	Head of People and Organisational Development
Paul King (PK)	Head of Training and Employee Development
Julie Harkins (JH)	Acting Head of Safety and Assurance
Fiona Munro (FM)	Deputy Head of People and Organisational Development
Rachel Scott (RS)	Deputy Head of People and Organisational Development
Mary Corry (MC)	Safety and Wellbeing Business Manager
Nicole Mulvey (NM)	Corporate Skills Development Advisor
Kirsty Darwent (KD)	Chair of SFRS Board
Alasdair Cameron (AC)	Group Commander, Board Support
Heather Greig (HG)	Executive Officer Board Support
Debbie Haddow (DH)	Board Support /Minutes

**OBSERVERS:**

None

**1 WELCOME**

- 1.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed those present.
- 1.2 The Committee were reminded to raise their hands, in accordance with the remote meeting protocol, should they wish to ask a question.
- 1.3 This meeting would be recorded and published on the public website.

**2 APOLOGIES**

- 2.1 Karen Lockhart, Head of Safety and Assurance

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

3.1 The Committee discussed and agreed that the Key Case Update report would be heard in private session due to the small number of individuals involved and confidentiality in line with Standing Orders (Item 9F). The draft minutes/verbal update of the Remuneration, Appointments and Nominations Sub Committee would also be taken in private due to the confidential nature of business taken to this meeting.

3.2 No further items were identified.

### **4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

4.1 None.

### **5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 4 MARCH 2021**

5.1 The following amendments were noted and agreed:

Paragraph 7.1.9 to be amended to read *"In regard to the PVG project, the Committee commented on the resilience and reliance on one counter-signatory ..."* instead of *"In regard to the PVG project, the Committee commented on the resilience on one counter-signatory ..."*.

Paragraph 8.14 to be amended to read *"He informed the Committee of the upcoming process for Area Commander, commencing on 22 March 2021"* instead of *"He informed the Committee of the upcoming process for Area Commander, commencing on 22 March 2021"*.

Paragraph 8.15 to be amended to read *"In addition, leadership mentoring processes were in place to support newly promoted post holders"* instead of *"In addition, leadership invention and mentoring processes were in place to support newly promoted post holders"*.

5.2 **Subject to the above amendments, the minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2021 were approved as a true record of the meeting.**

### **5.3 Matters Arising**

5.3.1 None

### **6 ACTION LOG**

6.1 The Committee considered the action log and noted the updates.

6.2 **The Committee noted the updated action log and approved the removal of the completed actions.**

### **7. PERFORMANCE AND RISK REPORT QUARTER 4 2020/21**

#### **7.1 People and Organisational Development (POD)**

7.1.1 SSe presented the Committee with the POD Progress and Performance Report Quarter 4 2020/21. The following key areas were highlighted:

- Report updated to align with the Annual Operating Plan (AOP)/Directorate Plan and refined presentation of statistical data.
- Due to the ongoing impact of COVID, some timescales within the AOP/Directorate Plan have been revised.
- Pay and Rewards Frameworks – Revised offer on the standardisation of Retained Duty System (RDS) Terms and Conditions was issued to the Fire Brigade Union (FBU) and the Fire and Rescue Services Association (FRSA). FRSA accepted this offer and the FBU were balloting members and recommending acceptance.
- Pay and Rewards Framework – Collective agreement reached with the FBU on standardisation of Instructors Terms and Conditions which would be implemented from 1 July 2021.

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- 2021 Equal Pay and Gender Pay Gap report demonstrates that the Gender Pay Gap currently sits at 1.01% (mean) and 2.5% (median). Favourable comparison against the UK national average and the inherited antecedent position.
- Promotion of diverse workforce including inclusion activities undertaken.
- Positive position regarding Modern apprenticeships.
- Progress within the Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Project including the development of the Dignity and Respect Toolkit and training packages.
- Strengthen approach to talent management and development including Leadership Development Centres.
- Health and Wellbeing – Contract awarded for scanning and indexing health and wellbeing files. This will improve access to the files, remove geographical barriers and enable redistribution of workloads across the full Health and Wellbeing team.
- Health and Wellbeing – Text reminder process has resulted in an 85% reduction in cancelled appointments compared to the previous Q4 figures.
- Fitness assessments – Work undertaken to plan and identify resource required to address the significant backlog and business cases have been approved.
- Covid 19 Wellbeing Group continue to support staff with regular themed updates and resources. Employee Wellbeing Survey was launched in Q4 and results would be shared with staff and would inform the mental health and wellbeing action plan. Some key themes were concerns around returning to the workplace, work life balance and agile/flexible working options.
- Health and wellbeing – Looking to develop local Wellbeing Champions.
- Implementation of Mental Health Strategy noting the important work of the Suicide Prevention Sub Group.
- Mental Health awareness campaign “Time to Talk” and a pilot programme of wellbeing support for Operational Control took place this quarter.
- Lifelines Scotland delivered a series of mental wellbeing sessions into LDC programmes and the Rivers Centre have appointed a part time mental health trainer.
- People, Training, Finance and Assets Systems programme continue to build momentum with the appointment of the programme manager. Contract negotiations with MidlandHR, the current HR system provider, resulted in a new contract for a period of 30 months and ensure stability as the programme progresses.
- Resourcing challenges and associated business cases for additional resource to increase the capacity of resourcing team.
- High level of people related activity within the Directorate throughout the year and work undertaken by individuals to produce these reports.

7.1.2 The Committee acknowledged the level of detail and work involved in producing these reports. The Committee commented on the benefit of presenting the metric, narrative and risks together to assist the flow of the report.

7.1.3 In relation to the Career Ready Programme, the Committee highlighted and praised the Service for offering laptops to participants to remove potential barriers.

7.1.4 The Committee noted the work in relation to contaminants and SSe to consider how this could be shared with the Committee.

7.1.5 The Committee commented on the consistently low percentage of exit interviews carried out and SSe confirmed that this area was being reviewed.

7.1.6 As a result of Covid, SSe confirmed that processes and technology introduced to deliver health and wellbeing services throughout the pandemic would continue to be utilised due to the significant improvement.

- 7.1.7 In relation to job evaluation (support staff), SSe noted that due to the review being in the early stages, the de-escalation has not been problematic. RS confirmed that trade union colleagues have been reassured of the timeline and the current approach would be reviewed to make them more effective and streamlined.
- 7.1.8 The Committee commented on the volume of work identified for the coming months and queried whether there were requirements for further additional resource to be identified. SSe reminded the Committee of the temporary resource provided at the start of the pandemic. The 2 business cases approved by the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) for additional resourcing within the Resourcing and Health and Wellbeing Teams. Also, further business cases for additional resourcing which has been supported by the SLT.
- 7.1.9 In relation to the Employee Wellbeing Survey, SSe confirmed that there was an overall good level of engagement from staff.
- 7.1.10 In relation to the new contract with MidlandsHR, the Committee noted the importance of ensuring a smooth transition onto the new system, once identified. SSE noted the significant amount of work to be undertaken regarding procuring a new system and to continue to improve current practices and processes in the meantime.
- 7.1.11 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

## 7.2 Training, Safety and Assurance

- 7.2.1 PK and JH jointly presented Training, Safety and Assurance Progress and Performance Quarter 4 Report 2020/21. PK highlighted the following key areas within the Training Function:
- Continues to support recruitment of Volunteer/Retained and Wholetime trainees.
  - Discussions with Scottish Government to achieve legislative changes to allow delegated driver testing for emergency services (Cat C) to maintain operational delivery.
  - Successfully delivered 16 specialist training courses targeted specifically to support frontline operational delivery.
  - Two main risks monitored during this period. These were capacity of resources to deliver training and capacity of facilities due to social distancing. No risk movement over the period. State of nation gap analysis undertaken to identify the gap between the ask on the training function and what could be delivered.
  - Training for Operational Competence for Flexi Duty Officers (FDO) had been added to the spotlight report.. Maintenance programme introduced over a 3-year cycle with 6 reoccurring subject areas and capacity of other seasonal/themed subjects. Current compliance level is 73%, noting the challenges in presenting this statistic due to how new FDO' s records were captured.
  - Operational Core Competence – Overall figures remain static but noted the decrease within Volunteer Duty System (VDS). Issues surrounding VDS training were subject to review by the RVDS Leadership Forum.
  - Incident Command Competencies – Overall remains stable but noted the decrease for FDO. To maintain a focus, this was now standing agenda item at the Service Delivery and Training Liaison meeting.
  - Ability to deliver Incident Command Competencies courses remotely. Only ICL1 requires a practical assessment and interaction.
  - Options delivered and approved to allow incident command competency assessments to be undertaken on the fireground.
  - Specialist rescue – different delivery method now in place to allow scheduling of training immediately before 18-day rota leave which enables individuals from different watches to attend.
  - Maintenance Phase Development Planner for Standard and Advanced Modules – remains static.

- 7.2.2 The Committee noted with interest how the use of innovation had enabled delivery of training to continue during this challenging year.
- 7.2.3 In relation to Covid cases being transmitted through behaviour, the Committee asked whether anything further could be done to educate staff. PK noted the high compliance levels within the training environment which was evidenced by the low number of cases. JH informed the Committee that the Health and Safety function undertook a Support Review (audit) to refine and identify behaviour themes and root causes. A report had been prepared for the Senior Management Board which identifies some refinements to existing control measures. Also, an awareness campaign would be launched and further engagement would be undertaken with property services.
- 7.2.4 JH highlighted the following key areas within the Safety and Assurance Function:
- Risk - No movement in risk levels.
  - Health and Safety Improvement Plan contains 87 actions, with 26 actions deferred due to Covid. Overall 59% of actions complete. Positive progress was being made on the remaining 25 actions.
  - All Key Performance Indicators, except for RIDDOR Reportable Injury, were reporting a positive downward trend. Going forward Covid related RIDDOR incidents would be reported separately as most incidents during this quarter were attributable to Covid.
  - Reduction in near miss reporting, however this was also reflected in the number of accident/ injuries. Accident/Injuries improved over the last 3-year period with significant decreases in the last quarter.
  - Accident/Injuries by activity – Non- Operational activities continue to be the most common environment for these types of incidents. Engaging with Service Delivery colleagues to develop a suite of safe systems of work for activities performed around the station.
  - Operational Accidents/Injuries – Increase in specialist services incidents relating to water rescue (37%) on the previous Q4 figures. Engaged with Service Delivery and convened a Water Rescue sub group to review the outcomes of a full analysis and the outcome report from the Mid Wales fatality.
  - Non- Operational Accidents/Injuries activities were primarily Covid related.
  - Training Accidents/Injuries – Significant reduction.
  - Service Delivery Areas Accidents/Injuries – Reduction in the North and West but increased in the East.
  - Working Days Lost report an increase in longer term absence (Covid related).
  - Most Common Accidents/Injuries by causation – Covid related transmission being the main cause.
  - Acts of Violence – Continue to increase across all service delivery areas with no identifiable themes in their nature.
  - Vehicle Accidents – Main causation remains slow speed manoeuvres at operational incidents. Small working group convened to review and identify how to reduce these types of incidents.
- 7.2.5 In regard to Health and Safety Improvement Plans, the Committee commented on the positive improvement and wider engagement undertaken within Directorates.
- 7.2.6 In regard to reducing slow speed manoeuvres, SS informed the Committee that this was a key focus for all Service Delivery Deputy Assistant Chief Officers. It was noted that all vehicle accidents were reported, investigated and any further action would be taken, if deemed appropriate.
- 7.2.7 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

## **8 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **8.1 Learning Needs Analysis 2021-22**

8.1.1 NM presented a report to the Committee to provide an update on the Service-wide Learning Needs Analysis (LNA) process for 2021-22. The following key points were noted:

- Amendments made to streamline the process.
- Impact of Covid anticipated and realised on the requirement for both internal and external leadership development and external provision.
- Recognition that internal provision had superseded normal capacity, therefore, the digital first approach would be utilised.
- Excess of requests for external provided budgeted learning provision, therefore, appropriate forums would be accessed to assess the Service's needs on a quarterly basis to assist recovery and renew.
- Budget to be maintained to support any future changes to the Service.
- Continue to develop the business planning model and business processes to ensure LNA continue fit the needs of the Service.

8.1.2 NM confirmed that the proposed 15% budget being held would be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that it is fully realised.

8.1.3 With regard to specific point of contact (SPOC) representative, NM informed the Committee that SPOCs would be identified from each function/Service Delivery Area to authorise and make decision on the budget allocation.

8.1.4 In regard to coaching and mentoring, the Committee queried the capacity within the organisation. NM noted that coaching and mentoring is part of the Services' ethos, but the Service were now looking to develop a more formal and standardised approach to ensure due governance.

8.1.5 **The Committee noted the report.**

## **9 INDEPENDENT AUDIT/INSPECTION ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

9.1 PK provided an update on the action plan to the Committee which has been developed in response to the report published by Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI), relating to the Training of the Retained Duty System (RDS) Personnel. The following key points were highlighted:

- Action plan contains 31 actions: 16 in progress, 5 deferred and 14 completed. Overall 77% completion
- Six action due dates have been revised.
- Actions 7.1 and 7.2, which were previously deferred, have been brought back on line with a revised due date.

9.2 In relation to the creation of action plans, the Committee asked whether and at what stage, does the Service consider the capacity required to address any identified actions. PSt noted that the current challenge was mainly a managerial capacity rather than instructional capacity. He commented on the impact and ongoing uncertainty due to Covid, therefore the main managerial focus had been on recovery, reset and renew. A capacity analysis had been carried out to identify skills training required to maintain operational response for the coming year and recovery plans have been developed. This analysis supports business cases for additional instructional and managerial capacity.

9.3 Within the Action Plan, PSt confirmed that the revised due date for Action 7.1 was March 2022 and noted that this timescale was realistic due to the alignment with the Operational Strategy.

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9.4 The Committee queried whether there was any increased risk due to actions being deferred. PSt commented on the actions relating to driver training which refers to Regulation 19 of the Road Safety Act 2006, which had not been enacted to date. A brief explanation was provided on the potential impact on training for individuals based on Islands and the ongoing engagement with the Sponsor Unit and Department of Transport to seek derogation.

9.5 The Committee noted that a summary, to provide continuity and assurance, would be helpful in future report.

9.6 **The Committee scrutinised report and welcomed the progress being made.**

### 10 HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY AND POLICY STATEMENT

10.1 JH presented a report to the Committee to provide an overview of SFRS Health and Safety Policy and Health and Safety Policy Statement as part of the SFRS Health and Safety Management System (HSMS). The following key points were highlighted:

- Subject to periodic review and updated to reflect the organisational restructure and formation of the Training, Safety and Assurance Directorate.
- Formation of National Safety and Assurance Board.
- Additional changes since submission of report – Amended job titles from Middle/Supervisor Managers to Strategic Managers.

10.2 In relation to the joint Chair and Chief Officer's Policy Statement, the Committee commented on whether it would be appropriate to amplify the responsibility on staff for their own safety. JH to consider and amend, if appropriate.

10.3 JD provided clarification on the role and remit of the National Safety and Assurance Board.

10.4 The Committee noted the favourable benchmarking of accident and injury incidents against other fire and rescue services and queried how comparability of the benchmarking exercise. JD informed the Committee that Chief Officer Blunden had recently been appointed to the role of Health & Safety Lead for the National Fire Chief Council (NFCC). Discussions have already taken place regarding identifying standardised performance indicators for the whole of the UK which could help make benchmarking easier and more worthwhile.

10.5 **The Committee scrutinised and supported the report.**

### 11 HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

11.1 JH presented the Committee with the Health and Safety Annual Report 2019-20 and highlighted the following key areas:

- Progress against Health and Safety department function plan and slight slippage due to the impact of Covid.
- Progress against health and safety improvement plans during 2019-20 and the 25% increase compared to the previous year.
- Dashboard summary of events over 2-year average noting the increased vehicle accidents.
- Breakdown by event category – Accident and injuries excluding RIDDOR improvement in East Service Delivery Area. Reduction in RIDDOR reportable events.
- Causation of accidents/injuries remain consistent with previous years.
- Improvement in ratio of near misses in relation to RIDDOR reportable events.
- Reduction in acts of violence across most areas.
- Increase (100%) in provision of special services.
- Vehicle accidents show a continuing upward trend.
- Health and safety performance in 2019/20, with the exception of vehicle accidents, continues to improve.

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- 11.2 The Committee commented on the number of vehicle accidents occurring at the closing stage of operational incidents. JH confirmed that the working group were considering all stages of operational incidents as well as other factors such as reduced adrenaline/risk perception. JD provided further assurance that these types of incidents were investigated.
- 11.3 The Committee were provided with clarification on how the completion percentage of health and safety improvement plan was being reported.
- 11.4 **The Committee scrutinised the report and thanked all those involved.**
- 12 UPDATE: WORKING TOGETHER FRAMEWORK**
- 12.1 **Update from Employee Partnership Forum (EPF)**
- 12.1.1 LB advised that no further EPF meeting had taken place.
- 12.1.2 **The Committee noted the verbal update.**
- 12.2 **Update from Partnership Advisory Forum (PAG)**
- 12.2.1 LD advised that no further PAG meeting had taken place.
- 12.2.2 **The Committee noted the verbal update.**
- 13 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER**
- 13.1 LBA presented the risk register to the Committee noting discussion earlier during the meeting and the potential additional risk relating to resources being considered.
- 13.3 **The Committee noted the report.**
- 14 ANNUAL VALUE ADDED STATEMENT**
- 14.1 PS presented the People Committee (PC) and Remunerations, Appointments and Nominations Sub-Committee (RANSC) Annual Value Added Statement 2020/21 to the Committee. The report outlined the evidence, and work undertaken during the year, on how Committees supports the effective functioning of the Board.
- 14.2 **The Committee scrutinised and were content with the report.**
- 15 UK FIRE STANDARDS 2021**
- 15.1 JD presented a report to the Committee outlining the Service's current position in relation to the recently published Approved UK Fire Standards for Emergency response driving, Operational preparedness, Operational competence and Operational Learning. Although the UK Fire Standards only applied to English Fire and Rescue Services, the Service have taken the opportunity to review and benchmark against these standards. A team of Operations and Training, Safety and Assurance staff undertook these reviews, and in their opinion the SFRS met the standards and evidence could be provided to support that assessment.
- 15.2 The Committee queried the potential to participate in peer to peer reviews. JD noted that there was currently no process in place to facilitate peer reviews or alternative quality assurance processes.
- 15.3 **The Committee noted the report.**
- 16 BRITISH STANDARDS INSTITUTE ASSESSMENTS – NEWBRIDGE**
- 16.1 JD presented a report to the Committee outlining the positive report received from the British Standards Institute (BSI) following a Continuing Assessment Visit (undertaken remotely) at Newbridge Training Centre in February 2021. No issues were raised during the inspection and the Training Centre maintained the BSI accreditation.

16.2 The Committee noted the positive outcome and acknowledged the efforts of all those involved which evidenced the continued improvement within the Service.

16.3 **The Committee noted the report.**

## 17 FORWARD PLANNING

### 17.1 POD Policy Review Schedule Update

17.1.1 The POD Policy Review Schedule Update report was presented to the Committee and the key policies review scheduled for the next quarter were highlighted.

- Revised Flexible Working Policy, Agile Working Framework, Homeworking Policy will be published simultaneously. Training materials to be developed to support the policy.
- Policies recently issued for consultation and/or published include Business Travel/Reimbursement of Expenses, Management of Health Condition and Health Surveillance.
- Progressing new/revised policies such as Whistleblowing, Drivers Health Assessment, Pre-Placement.
- New policy for Wholetime Uniformed Instructor Employees Working Hours and Leave Policy has been published and will help progress in implementation of standard terms and conditions for Wholetime Uniformed Instructors.
- Task and Finish group convened to develop the Secondary Employment Policy.
- Details of policies to be issued for first consultation during quarter 1.
- Outline of the governance processes in place, noting the consultation and engagement arrangements with relevant stakeholders and the potential to convene task and finish groups if deemed necessary.

17.1.2 The Committee requested an update on the Substance Misuse Policy. As a result of Covid, MC confirmed that this had been deferred to 2022, however, initial work had commenced and a draft policy had been developed. RS reminded the Committee of the support available and guidance information developed by the Wellbeing Group which was available on the iHub.

17.1.3 **The Committee noted the report.**

*(A Buchanan left the meeting at 1530 hrs)*

### 17.2 H&S Policy

17.2.1 JH presented a report to the Committee providing an update on ongoing work in relation to the development and review of SFRS's Health and Safety Policy and associated management arrangements. The following key points were highlighted:

- Forward planning schedule covered the period 2019-2024.
- Three new management arrangements have been developed: Management Self Audit, Storage and Pressures Systems.
- Two management arrangements were currently out for consultation: Organised Events (charity) and New and Expectant Mothers.

17.2.2 **The Committee noted the report.**

### 17.3 Committee Forward Plan Review

17.3.1 The Committee noted the Forward Plan.

### 17.4 Items for Consideration at Future IGF, Board and Strategy Meetings

17.4.1 There were no items identified.

## 18 REVIEW OF ACTIONS

18.1 HG confirmed there were no formal actions raised during the meeting.

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### **19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 19.1 The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday 9 September 2021 at 1300 hrs.
- 19.2 On behalf of the Committee, KD thanked Bill McQueen, Anne Buchanan and Primrose Stark for their contributions, particularly noting Primrose's influence through her role of Chair, during their time on the Committee. PS thanked her fellow Board members and Directorate colleagues for their contributions and improvements within the Committee.
- 19.3 There being no further matters to discuss, the public meeting closed at 1540 hrs.

### **PRIVATE SESSION**

#### **20 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PRIVATE MEETING: 4 MARCH 2021**

- 20.1 The minutes of the private meeting held on 4 March 2021 were approved as a true record of the meeting.

#### **21 REMUNERATIONS, APPOINTMENTS AND NOMINATIONS SUB COMMITTEE (RANSc) UPDATE**

- 21.1 The draft minutes of the RANSc meeting on 4 March 2021 had been circulated to the Committee. The Committee noted the key issues discussed at the meeting of RANSc that was held earlier today (2 June 2021).

#### **22 KEY CASE UPDATE 2020/21 – QUARTER 4**

- 22.1 FM presented a report providing an overview of the Discipline, Grievance, Bullying and Harassment Statistics for Quarter 4 2020/21.