

Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2022

March 2022

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Ministerial Foreword

People across Scotland have had to come to terms with the impact of Covid19 on every aspect of our lives. Some have faced and had to deal with the ill health or death of a relative, friend or colleague, and everyone has tackled the impact of lockdown and restrictions on daily life.

Against the backdrop of a global pandemic we have seen incredible examples of individuals and families, public and community services, organisations and businesses coming together to respond, with a spirit of collaboration, resilience, creativity and compassion.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) was a key partner in responding to the pandemic and contributed greatly to meeting needs of local communities. SFRS staff are to be commended for stepping up and taking on new roles and adapting to new ways of working. The SFRS Board quickly adapted to new ways of working throughout the pandemic, with the Strategic Leadership Team providing oversight and speedy decision making to ensure continuity of service.

All organisations need to adapt to their operating context which continually shifts around them, creating new and at times more complex demands on them. This Framework advocates further evolution because the context in which SFRS operates and the challenges that it faces are continuing to change.

In addition to the challenges which Covid19 recovery and EU Exit bring, Scotland is facing changes in our climate, our population and in the expectations the public holds for all public services. While the resultant challenges that Scotland is facing may be more complex, they also serve to foster opportunities for dynamic public sector organisations like SFRS to flourish.

We are publishing this new Fire and Rescue Framework 10 years on from the Christie Commission - a powerful, inclusive vision which SFRS has embraced in adopting an outcomes-based approach when formulating proposals on the future role of the Service. Its central tenets of empowering, of shared systems that focus on prevention, and of equitable partnerships still hold true but they are yet to be delivered in full. It is more important than ever that we revisit Christie's principles and hold to them as we look to renew.

Fuelled by the ethos of Christie our aspiration is not to produce a 'top down' blueprint for SFRS to strictly adhere to. Indeed, the Service continues to demonstrate an unwavering commitment to creatively deliver the strategic priorities, many of which still hold, set out within the 2016 Fire and Rescue Framework.

Underpinned by Scotland's National Outcomes and our Vision for Justice in Scotland, the strategic priorities set out within this Framework serve to collaboratively drive forward how the Service can do more for the people of Scotland, while adapting to the changing nature of risks facing communities across the country.

Minister for Community Safety

Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2022

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Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2022

1. Introduction and Context

The **Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2022** (‘the Framework’) sets out Scottish Ministers’ expectations of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS). The Framework provides SFRS with strategic priorities and objectives, together with guidance on how the delivery of its functions should contribute to the Scottish Government’s purpose.

Legislative basis

SFRS was established as a single national organisation by the [Police and Fire Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2012](#) (‘the 2012 Act’) to provide fire and rescue services across Scotland. The 2012 Act also amended the [Fire \(Scotland\) Act 2005](#) (‘the 2005 Act’) to take account of fire reform and further modernise and update the functions of SFRS.

The [Scottish Parliament’s Justice Committee’s Report on its post-legislative scrutiny of the 2012 Act](#) recognised significant SFRS achievements, including the creation of national capabilities in fire and rescue, which have improved the service to Scottish communities.

Scottish Ministers have a [statutory duty](#) to prepare a Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland setting priorities and objectives and providing guidance to SFRS on the execution of its functions. SFRS has a statutory duty to have regard to the Framework when preparing its Strategic Plan which sets out how it will deliver its functions as well as setting out the outcomes which will be used to measure its performance in doing so.

Contribution to the Scottish Government’s Purpose and National Outcomes

The [National Performance Framework](#) (NPF) sets out a purpose, values and 11 National Outcomes for Scotland, showing the kind of country we want to be. It is Scotland’s wellbeing framework, and reflects the issues that affect people in Scotland now and for future generations. The 11 National Outcomes are aligned with the [17 UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) which set out the major global challenges to be achieved by all nations by 2030.

Progress towards the vision in the NPF is tracked through 81 National Indicators covering a broad range of social, environmental and economic measures.

Purpose

The NPF is for all of Scotland. We aim to:

- Create a more successful country;
- Give opportunities to all people living in Scotland;
- Increase the wellbeing of people living in Scotland;
- Create sustainable and inclusive growth; and

- Reduce inequalities and give equal importance to economic, environmental and social progress.

National Outcomes

SFRS's delivery of the priorities and objectives set out in the Framework will also help to achieve the Scottish Government's purpose by contributing to the delivery of our National Outcomes, which are:

- We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential;
- We have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- We have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone;
- We are open, connected and make a positive contribution internationally;
- We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe;
- We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society;
- We are healthy and active;
- We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally;
- We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely;
- We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment; and
- We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination.

The Justice Vision and Priorities

The Scottish Government's "[Vision for Justice in Scotland](#)" was published in February 2022. It sets out the vision for a just, safe resilient Scotland and it is aligned with and underpinned by the Scottish Government's NPF. The NPF recognises that Government alone cannot deliver those broad societal outcomes and that it requires all of us from all sectors and as individuals to realise these.

Part of the Vision for Justice is the aim for a society in which people feel, and are, safer in their communities. The need to feel and be safe is not just about being protected from crime and offending. We also should be supported to be as safe from unintentional harm whether that is in our homes or in our communities, either as a result of accidents or emergency events.

We aim to reduce unintentional harm in our communities in regards to events like fires, flooding and other emergency events which put our communities under strain as well as harm from accidents. We have made real progress in this area and the number of fires has fallen by over a third in the last decade. However, we still require greater resilience to limit the impact of these emergency events, using the assets within our communities and support from public services to ensure that as individuals we suffer less harm including from emergency situations and fires.

SFRS, as a member of the National Justice Board, has endorsed this Vision for Justice in Scotland and will be instrumental in achieving its aims.

SFRS's Purpose

SFRS's purpose, was defined by Scottish Ministers in the [2013](#) and [2016](#) Frameworks and is reaffirmed in the 2022 Framework as below:

“The main purpose of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is to work in partnership with communities and with others in the public, private and third sectors, on prevention, protection and response, to improve the safety and well-being of people throughout Scotland”.

SFRS's purpose embodies the Scottish Government's aspirations for the Service to achieve better outcomes for the people of Scotland. In carrying out its purpose SFRS should work with its partners to identify and focus on mitigating the wide range of risks facing communities in order to keep communities and citizens safe and promote their well-being.

SFRS should be alive to the broader challenges facing our communities and evolve to meet new risks, to adapt to social change, to improve effectiveness and efficiency and to grasp the opportunities offered by technological advances.

Christie Commission – 10 Years On

The Framework is published 10 years after the Christie Commission published its [report](#) on the future delivery of public services in Scotland, and the Scottish Government produced its [response](#) which sets out our commitment to Public Service Reform (PSR). The Christie Commission report and our subsequent PSR agenda share the same underpinning purpose: to improve outcomes, reduce inequalities and empower people in sustainable ways. Our commitment to reform is built on five pillars: a focus on prevention; partnership working; empowering staff and communities; outcomes-based performance, and an emphasis on the distinctive needs of Place.

A decade on, the need for continuous improvement and the value of these pillars are stronger than ever, not least as we pursue recovery and renewal from the impacts of the Covid19 pandemic and address the challenges of climate change. While we continue to strive and reinforce these principles - by engaging with citizens, promoting open government and empowering individuals and communities – there continues to exist an opportunity for Scotland to be a world leader in developing evidence based approaches for policy with a prevention, co-production and outcomes focus. SFRS should continue to look for opportunities to share buildings and other assets with the other emergency services in Scotland along with actively engaging with communities in order to drive change.

SFRS should explore how it will continue to change what it does; how it operates; how it works with communities and partners in achieving success and how it will further develop its people to drive better outcomes for the communities of Scotland.

There is an opportunity for SFRS to take a lead in developing some of the emerging methodologies associated with participative, joined up, preventative and outcomes focused policy and practice. For example co-produced research can help ensure that evidence is user focused, relevant and understandable to communities and partners seeking to take a more active role in improving public safety/health outcomes.

Strategic Priorities

The Framework sets out 7 strategic priorities for SFRS which are outcome-focused and set within the context of the Scottish Government's purpose. These priorities form the basis for the narrative of the following sections of the Framework. Many of these priorities are overarching and are relevant to several aspects of SFRS's role. The strategic priorities for SFRS are summarised at **Annex 1**. It should be noted that the order of the priorities does not denote their level of importance. All priorities are of equal importance.

Covid19 Recovery and Renewal

The Covid19 pandemic has changed our lives on a dramatic scale. The direct and indirect impacts of the pandemic have been devastating for individuals and communities across the whole of Scotland.

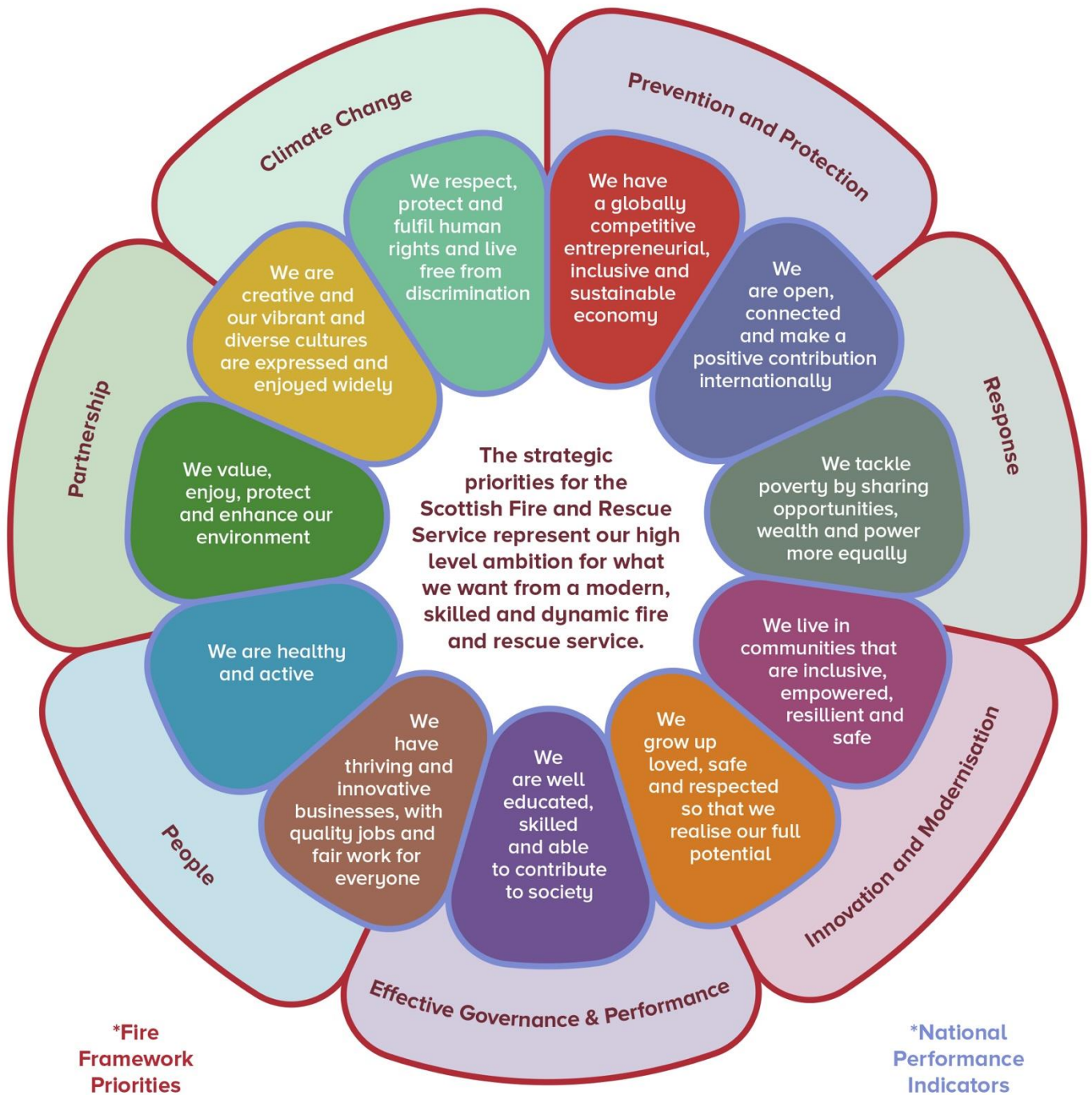
The Scottish Government acted quickly to support people and communities, doing all it could to protect people's jobs, homes, living standards and access to necessities. In doing so, the Scottish Government invested more than £1 billion of additional resource to support people impacted by the pandemic and to build resilience in public services. Covid19 recovery is a priority for the Scottish Government and will be embedded in wider and accelerated public sector reform.

Like many Scottish public services SFRS rose to the numerous challenges posed by Covid19 and has shown compassion, ingenuity and innovation in how it maintained service delivery whilst harnessing its 'can do' outlook to aid both partners and communities alike, as well as looking after its own staff. The pandemic has demonstrated that real change can happen at scale when we work together at pace, with flexibility and passion to deliver positive outcomes for our communities.

Another lesson from the collective response to Covid19 has been that professional, local teams that have more flexibility and freedom to prevent or solve problems can quickly build trust in communities and deliver impressive results. These frontline teams are often best placed to help individuals, families and communities. In particular during the pandemic, in some health board areas, SFRS was able to offer fire stations as community testing premises with SFRS staff assisting the process by carrying out 'meeting & greeting' and 'exit interviews' whilst also tending to important administrative work.

As Scotland undertakes the long, necessary and challenging process of Covid19 recovery, SFRS should explore the implications and opportunities for the Service going forward.

Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2022



The National Outcomes will help to achieve

Our Purpose:

To focus on creating a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through increased wellbeing, and sustainable and inclusive economic growth.



The Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2022 (“The Framework”) sets out Scottish Ministers’ expectations of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. The Framework provides SFRS with strategic priorities and objectives, together with guidance on how the delivery of its functions should contribute to the Scottish Government’s purpose.

2. Strategic Priority 1 – Prevention and Protection

The overriding purpose of SFRS remains to improve the safety and well-being of communities. A priority for SFRS is preventing fires and reducing their human, social and economic impact. SFRS should use an evidence-based approach to target groups and individuals according to risk, and universal population wide activities, to improve fire and wider community safety. These should contribute to reducing inequality and encouraging sustainable and inclusive growth. SFRS should work with public, private and voluntary organisations; communities and individuals where they can add value and contribute to outcomes.

Introduction

Keeping communities safe from harm is a core principle of SFRS. Fire safety is therefore a priority. The ambition is to drive the incidence of fires, casualties and fatalities towards zero.

There is a continuing commitment by the Scottish Government and SFRS to act on the learning from the Grenfell Tower fire that resulted in the death of 72 people on 14 June 2017. Given the scale, background to, and impact of the fire and the work of the Public Inquiry, addressing the implications will remain a priority for SFRS and the Scottish Government.

Building on the 2016 Framework, SFRS should continue to contribute to the wider safety and well-being of communities in Scotland. This should make most effective use of firefighters and other staff, using evidence to learn what works and inform improvements.

Continuous improvement is integral to all Prevention and Protection work, including fire safety, for the effective use of resources and to achieve impact. This will involve, in partnership, on-going data gathering, analysis and use, to drive improvement to reduce fatalities and casualties and to swiftly identify new risks and trends which need addressed.

Approach to Fire Safety

Effective fire safety comprises measures to prevent fires and to reduce and mitigate risk. It requires individuals, communities, businesses, services, government and SFRS to work together and take action. SFRS has a key role in continuing to fulfil its statutory duty to promote fire safety and as an enforcing authority for fire safety legislation.

Statutory Duties

[The 2005 Act](#), and associated regulations, provide the legislative basis for SFRS's fire safety work. It establishes the duty to promote fire safety and appoints SFRS as an enforcing authority for relevant premises. It comprises:

- The requirement to promote fire safety by providing information, publicity and encouragement to prevent fires and protect life, as well as giving advice on fire prevention, restricting fire spread and means of escape.
- Enforcement of fire safety legislation, that generally applies to non-domestic premises (“relevant premises”), to protect employees, residents and the public (“relevant persons”). Responsibility for compliance in these premises is with employers and others with control of the premises (known as the Dutyholder).
- Informing and encouraging people to be responsible for fire safety in their own homes on a voluntary basis, since domestic premises as defined in the 2005 Act are not “relevant premises”.

Promoting Fire Safety

SFRS should continue to work in partnership to prevent fires. The priority is to protect people most at risk from fire whilst also contributing to reducing inequalities. In particular the longer term effects of fires can worsen people’s social and economic situation where it causes homelessness that prevents continuing in employment.

The rate of dwelling fires and fire related casualties are strongly associated with deprivation. According to the [Fire safety regime for existing high rise domestic buildings - review: Fairer Scotland Duty summary](#), domestic fires are 4.2 times higher and fire related casualty rates are 4.9 times higher in the 20% most deprived areas compared to the 20% least deprived. As evidenced in the [SFRS Strategic Plan 2019-22](#), increased risk of harm, including from fire, is related to such factors as poorer health, lower education attainment and disability. By continuing to take a risk-based approach, to prioritise communities and individuals, inequalities can be reduced. This targeted prevention should happen in conjunction with proportionate and impactful population wide prevention activities.

Partnership working with individuals, families and friends, other public, voluntary and private organisations is essential, so that individuals and households at risk of fire are identified.

SFRS should continue to use and develop a range of tools and initiatives for community-based fire prevention. The aim is to improve people’s knowledge and understanding so positive fire safety behaviour is embedded. It is likely it will incorporate information, publicity campaigns, guidance, bespoke advice and, where necessary, enforcement action. Central to this is SFRS’s work with communities and organisations to produce and disseminate information effectively. This should be informed by evidence and learning from activities to drive improvement and ensure the intended impact is being achieved. Learning from what does and does not work should be shared across the organisation.

The longer term ambition should be for individuals, communities, organisations and businesses to be confident and capable in taking responsibility for fire safety for their homes, premises and environment. Only when this is achieved, as demonstrated by evidence, can SFRS apply a lighter touch focused on maintaining this, with less direct active involvement in education, supporting and enforcement activities.

SFRS should continue to contribute to the strengthening of general Prevention and Protection policy and practice. This includes contributing and advising Scottish Government on policy developments to maintain and strengthen fire safety via building standards and housing policy, notably prompted by the consequences of the Grenfell Tower fire and the associated Public Inquiry.

Improving Wider Community Safety

SFRS already contributes to the wider safety of communities. SFRS should continue to work with partners, as under Strategic Priority 7, for targeted, integrated public safety campaigns that raise awareness of fire, water and road safety, and other community safety matters, that also contributes to reducing inequalities.

By gathering and sharing information on other community risks with relevant agencies, more can be done to address those risks. SFRS can, with other public and voluntary services, build community capacity to respond to changing risk profiles (for example aging population and climate change) utilising a broad assessment of safety and wellbeing. SFRS should expand its contribution to improving wider community safety, for example the prevention of avoidable injury of older people at home, to minimise avoidable demand on SFRS and on health and care services. SFRS should continue to prioritise support involving young people from care and other disadvantaged backgrounds, to reduce inequality.

SFRS should continue to work to progress the Scottish Government's commitment to building safer communities with partners and develop a co-ordinated and strategic approach to reducing unintentional harm. This should prioritise understanding the risks and support the wide range of initiatives and actions that are already taking place locally across Scotland and to share good practice as enabled under the 2005 Act. This will prioritise groups most likely to experience unintentional harm: people in Scotland's most deprived communities, those aged over 65 and children under 5 ([Scottish Government Unintentional Harm website](#)). SFRS should continue to support delivery of the '[Scottish Government's Action Plan on Fireworks](#)' to ensure they are used safely and handled with care, and do not cause harm, distress or serious injury.

Fire Safety Enforcement for Relevant Premises

SFRS should deliver its statutory duties by providing information, guidance and advice and fire safety audits of relevant premises.

SFRS is an enforcing authority for the [Fire \(Scotland\) Act 2005 Part 3](#) to ensure the Dutyholder complies with legislative requirements. In line with the [Scottish Regulators' Strategic Code of Practice](#), SFRS should continue a positive enabling approach in pursuing outcomes; facilitating compliance where possible but using formal enforcement where necessary. This involves working collaboratively with the Dutyholder and other regulators.

The findings from fire investigations should be used to enhance community and firefighter safety, to inform community safety engagement initiatives, fire safety enforcement strategies and inform improvement. SFRS should work with Police

Scotland and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and those affected where required.

Where audits need to be prioritised, this must be based on evidence where the risk to life is greatest. By reducing the number, and severity, of incidents in premises SFRS should contribute to reducing the economic and social impacts of fire.

SFRS should ensure that relevant information from Prevention and Protection and Operations functions is shared in a timely way. This should be two way and includes, for example, Prevention and Protection staff notifying operational personnel of operational risk information which could impact on firefighter safety or operational crews informing Prevention and Protection staff of potential fire safety concerns.

Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals

SFRS should continue to pursue effective action to reduce the number of Unwanted Fire Alarms Signals and the weight of SFRS resources that respond to them. Automatic Fire Alarm systems (AFAs) are a vital fire safety measure in many premises, providing early warning of fire for occupants, but they can be susceptible to false alarms. In 2020-21 false alarm attendances from detecting apparatus comprised 41.8% of all incidents attended by SFRS, a significant use of resources. Driving down these unwanted actuations is beneficial to all those involved by, for example: avoiding disruption to businesses and the public, and maintaining confidence in automatic fire alarm systems. Reducing the occasions fire appliances have to mobilise under “blue light” conditions, will decrease the risk to fire crews and other road users.

SFRS should gather and publish data on the outputs from these activities, including via its Performance Management Framework, and use it to track and report on progress on improving outcomes.

3. Strategic Priority 2 - Response

In conjunction with effectively addressing risk, SFRS should ensure that the capability of its assets and staff, combined with technological improvements, enable it to respond to incidents with the right resources at the right time across communities in Scotland. The Service should embrace a flexible, innovative and inclusive approach to its service delivery and resilience planning, ensuring its response resources and crewing arrangements are aligned to current and future risks.

Introduction

SFRS strives to provide the highest possible standards of emergency response in all 32 of Scotland's Local Authority areas. Its work is guided by the Scottish Government's [National Performance Framework](#) and bound by the key legislation cited within this Framework's introduction.

SFRS need to continue to adapt to the changing nature of risks facing communities across the country to achieve better outcomes for the people of Scotland. SFRS should continue to analyse and understand the broad range of community risks across Scotland to ensure it has the right resources in the right places at the right time in order to deliver the right service.

SFRS should strategically decide how best to locate its operational resources based on where the greatest risk exists, making certain that the greatest possible improvement in public safety can be assured across all of Scotland. The Service should look ahead, working in partnership with other agencies, to make sure that emerging risks are identified early, and actions required to mitigate and address these emerging risks can be implemented before our communities are exposed to them. This strategic management of risk will enable a consistent approach to achieving an optimal balance between prevention and response and should inform the operational policies and decisions of SFRS.

Maintaining Operational Response, Firefighter Safety, Learning and Localism

SFRS continues to have a statutory duty, under the [2005 Act](#) and [The Fire \(Additional Function\) \(Scotland\) Order 2005](#), to make provisions for firefighting and a range of other emergencies including road traffic collisions, flooding, search and rescue, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents, as well as having the power to respond to other incidents at its discretion.

SFRS should provide the most effective operational response possible at times of emergency, whilst maintaining firefighter safety. These two key requirements are inherently linked, as it is only when firefighters have the correct procedures, training and equipment available to them that they can operate to their potential in challenging circumstances.

SFRS should review on an ongoing basis all aspects of the operational performance of its crews, to enable it to monitor compliance with requirements, but more importantly, in an attempt to identify opportunities for improvement, ensure it takes

action to immediately rectify any identified shortfalls. SFRS should, where appropriate to do so, share lessons learned (positive and negative) nationally through recognised protocols and also with local partners where appropriate.

SFRS should maintain robust systems, processes and procedures that build upon national guidance, supporting the identification and management of operational risk. This will enable the Service to provide a safe, effective and efficient response to operational incidents.

SFRS should review at appropriate intervals its operational resources and working practices in light of emerging issues, equipment, programmes and practices against UK and international best practice and advances in technology, enhancing its operational capability and the safety of its firefighters. SFRS should ensure firefighter safety is enhanced through the provision of robust procurement, evaluation, monitoring and maintenance of all operational assets and equipment.

SFRS should maintain the enhancement of its resilience and emergency call handling capability, providing efficient, effective, highly resilient and dynamic mobilisation for firefighting and deployment to a range of other emergencies such as road traffic collisions, flooding, urban search and rescue, water safety, and hazardous material incidents.

SFRS's delivery model must be flexible to reflect the differing needs of local communities. In accordance with the 2012 Act, it must produce a local fire and rescue plan for each local authority area. These local plans should present profiles which reflect the risks to the specific local authority area, as well as setting out local solutions to local issues and detail local activity.

Resilience – Operational Readiness and Capability

SFRS should continue to play a key role in the wider resilience agenda. [The Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#) requires SFRS to work with other responders to plan for emergency incidents. Together with its partners, SFRS should assess risks, prepare for and be able to respond to any significant threats or major emergencies.

National and regional resilience partnerships, in which SFRS has an integral role, coordinate the preparation of risk registers and response plans and arrange vital joint training and exercising events. SFRS should also play a key role in building community resilience more generally by working in partnership with other responders, and continue to help protect both Scottish and UK critical infrastructure assets.

Increasing Threat of Terrorism – Preparing and Responding Appropriately

The nature and sophistication of the terrorist threat to the country continues to evolve. SFRS should use shared best practice and research to ensure that the Service's preparedness and response continues to keep firefighters and communities safe, in partnership with emergency service partners.

SFRS should continue to work closely with its partners in Scotland and across the UK, to understand current threats and to ensure it has robust multi-agency and Service plans in place should an attack happen. SFRS crews should be prepared to respond appropriately to prevent further harm to life or infrastructure. As a national service, SFRS should continue to evolve to meet new and emerging risks across communities, including Mass Casualty Events. Going forward, SFRS firefighters should be appropriately trained and equipped to be deployed as part of a coordinated multi-agency response to such attacks.

Service Delivery – Embracing Future Opportunities

Building on the evidence-based scenario setting outlined within its ['Long-Term Vision'](#), SFRS should ensure that it understands what changes it may need to make to be able to respond to any new or changing demands.

New challenges and risks continue to emerge for SFRS; for example, the continuing and ever-changing terrorist threat mentioned above, climate change (discussed separately in Strategic Priority 4 of this Framework) and the impact of an ageing population. Such changes present challenges and opportunities for SFRS and all are set against public sector budgets, in an ever more demanding economic climate.

While its response arrangements are a core element of the Service's role, it should be recognised that SFRS's response to communities is, and has the potential to be, much broader than operational firefighters responding to traditional fire service related emergencies. From emergency pre-planning of major events to providing opportunities for young people through its Youth Volunteer Scheme, SFRS's involvement and contributions in a range of settings should be viewed in a holistic way. For example, SFRS should consider how it can contribute to Scotland's Promise on children and young people and help deliver [#KeepthePromise](#).

Collectively, SFRS's operational approach, in which the principles and dynamics of prevention, protection, response and resilience are embedded, should serve as an overarching intervention strategy which enhances public safety across Scotland and supports improved wider outcomes for communities.

SFRS should expand the use of its extensive and strategically placed resources across all communities in Scotland to better support partner organisations, in particular the Scottish Ambulance Service and the wider NHS. SFRS has the opportunity to increase life chances in numerous ways such as responding to Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrests and other emergency medical events. SFRS has the opportunity to significantly contribute to improving a wider range of community outcomes. Working closely with its people, partners and staff representative bodies SFRS should consider how it is able to save more lives in different ways. This is explored further in Strategic Priority 3 of the Framework, 'Innovation and Modernisation'.

Utilising Technological Advances

While the Service has already made some advances in changing the types of appliances and firefighting technology it utilises, the increasing availability of

information and new technologies offers SFRS huge potential to improve how it delivers fire and rescue services.

The use of technology in society sets new expectations about the services SFRS provides, how data from such technology is appropriately accessed and its levels of transparency in making use of data in improving outcomes for people. Digitisation also offers significant opportunities to accelerate business processes, manage risk more effectively, revolutionise how SFRS reduces risk, and improves safety outcomes. SFRS should utilise such technology to help safeguard the most vulnerable people in their homes and to enhance its interactions with the public more widely.

4. Strategic Priority 3 – Innovation and Modernisation

SFRS should continually improve and modernise the service it provides so that it can do more to improve outcomes for communities across Scotland. Modernisation proposals should be considered, developed and delivered using sound evidence and should include but not be limited to ensuring SFRS is using its people, assets and financial resources in the most efficient and effective manner and that the role of firefighters is modernised to allow the Service to address new and emerging risks in our communities.

Introduction

SFRS has successfully delivered full integration into a single national service and is becoming increasingly involved in more non-fire related prevention and rescue activities. This has provided an opportunity for the Service to explore innovative approaches to flexible public service delivery whilst maintaining its core services.

Modernisation of the Service should include, but not be limited to:

- How the Service responds to changing community risks;
- The breadth of SFRS support to communities in pursuing improvements in their safety and wellbeing;
- The use of new technology in both operational and support functions;
- More modern and fit-for-purpose facilities shared with other public partners;
- Improving how, why and when SFRS engages and communicates with the public; and
- A full contribution to the Scottish Government's Net Zero emissions targets.

The capability and the skills of SFRS should be increasingly used to improve outcomes by promoting the broader safety and well-being of individuals and communities, as well as continuing to improve fire safety and promote fire prevention.

Recovery and renewal from the impacts of the Covid19 pandemic has demanded radical action. This has also offered an opportunity for some evaluation and reflection on how public services operate and work in partnership and the tools (including digital) that help us to do this.

SFRS should ensure it fully evaluates *what has worked well* and consider stopping or changing what does not work; so it builds on those experiences, making sure it can integrate them into new ways of working.

Full and meaningful engagement with all stakeholders but in particular staff, unions and the public is essential on developing and delivering proposed improvements to the way SFRS delivers its services.

Context

The success of SFRS in delivering its traditional operational activity provides an opportunity to explore where it can add further value to the broader public service outcomes that we are working to deliver across Scotland. Since 2016 SFRS carried out extensive planning and consultation as part of service transformation. SFRS should build on the work already undertaken in relation to broadening the role of firefighters to ensure the Service can better contribute to positive outcomes in Scotland's communities.

Research and Development

Advances in technology mean that new and innovative solutions are being developed which greatly improve firefighting and rescue operations and help the Service pursue improved levels of efficiency and productivity. SFRS should research and develop, and where feasible introduce, new technology and ways of working that improves firefighter and public safety. This might for example include greater use of fire suppression systems, where SFRS could work with communities to widen the appropriate installation of such systems. In the introduction of any new technology or way of working it is essential for SFRS to fully evaluate the change to ensure it is delivering the planned benefits.

SFRS should keep its digital strategy under review to ensure its systems and information technology is making best use of the technology and innovation which is available.

At the height of the Covid19 pandemic SFRS relied more heavily than ever on critical digital technologies for example in providing IT hardware and applications to facilitate increased numbers of staff working from home. Increasing reliance on technology is likely to continue therefore Cyber resilience is central to SFRS delivering a secure and resilient service.

SFRS should have robust, efficient and effective safeguards and processes in place, that should be well rehearsed, tested regularly and can be enacted with ease should a cyber-attack occur.

In considering how it should develop its systems and services, SFRS should take into account the Scottish Government's Digital Strategy, ["A Changing Nation: How Scotland will thrive in a digital world"](#).

In considering innovation, SFRS should work with academics, universities and fire engineering experts. As one of the largest Fire and Rescue Services of its type in the world, SFRS should consider a greater emphasis on global horizon scanning, testing the market to see what innovation it can offer in terms of new technologies and in looking at other organisations on how they are developing.

Future Development of the Service

SFRS should ensure that any changes or improvements to the service it provides are carried out on the basis of sound research, data and evidence, in particular through a thorough and robust assessment of the risks facing individual communities across Scotland.

Effective Use of Resources

Through a thorough risk based approach, SFRS should consider if its physical and people resources are situated in the right place and available at the right time. This should include using risk based evidence to ensure that fire stations are situated in the best place and firefighters are available at the right time.

Retained and Volunteer Duty Systems

Retained and Volunteer Duty Systems (RVDS) play a vital role in ensuring communities are safe and protected outside our major towns and cities. The large areas of Scotland which rely on RVDS means it is essential that SFRS ensure that there are sufficient Retained and Volunteer firefighters to provide an effective service. In recognition of the ongoing challenge of recruitment and retention of RVDS firefighters for fire services across the UK and beyond SFRS has already carried out significant work in this area. SFRS should link this work with its wider modernisation objectives to formulate and deliver a plan to address those challenges, particularly around recruitment, retention and availability.

Modernisation and Expansion of the Firefighter Role

SFRS should continue to consider all options on how the service can deliver better outcomes in communities including developing the skills and abilities of the workforce to meet present and future risks and threats. Fire and Rescue Services across the UK are also considering the role of firefighters and SFRS should remain vigilant to the development of the role in other parts of the UK.

The NHS was under sustained pressure throughout the Covid19 emergency and the recovery from that will require a sustained period of activity for some time. The expansion of SFRS emergency medical response and prevention activities offers the opportunity for SFRS to contribute to Scotland's recovery effort.

SFRS should also give consideration to integrating emergency response provision, including medical response, in a holistic way taking into account the broader aims and aspirations of the Scottish Government to integrate public service provision.

SFRS should aim for any changes to the Service, including widening the services it provides to produce better outcomes in communities, to be delivered without significant increase in the medium to long term financial resources needed in running the Service. The Scottish Government will work closely with the Service to ensure it has the resources it needs, within the context of meeting all the demands on the

Scottish budget, and it should continue to build on the efficiencies it has already delivered to make maximum use of the funding it receives.

As reflected in the People section of this framework, SFRS should deliver all the improvements set out in this section as a Fair Work employer. This means it should fully consult and consider the views of staff and trade unions on workplace matters, including in relation to developing and delivering fundamental change and improvements to the Service.

Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP)

ESMCP is a major UK wide programme led by the Home Office to replace the Airwave and Firelink mobile communication systems. SFRS should continue to engage at strategic and operational levels to aid the roll out of this important programme and must ensure that its other ICT systems can dovetail with ESMCP for the transfer and use of data.

5. Strategic Priority 4 – Climate Change

SFRS should continue working with other public sector partners and communities to support action to address the climate emergency including the challenges of more extreme weather events. SFRS should do so by preventing and reducing its own greenhouse gas emissions and working to ensure Scotland's communities are resilient and safe in response to the changing climate. SFRS's corporate response to the climate emergency should include, for example, commitment towards transitioning over to ultra-low emission fleets, renewable energy and heat; low carbon buildings and materials; and wherever possible, maximising the positive impact procurement can have on addressing the climate emergency.

Introduction

In April 2019, Scotland's First Minister declared a global climate emergency. SFRS must continue to address and prepare for new challenges as Scotland faces more extremes of weather. SFRS must be sufficiently equipped to deal with the effects from wildfires and flooding in particular. Scottish Ministers require SFRS to continue to work in collaboration with partners and communities to ensure collective resources jointly tackle issues caused by the climate emergency, they relate to inequality and to protect those citizens at greatest risk.

SFRS and the Climate Emergency

Scottish Ministers require two things from SFRS in this regard:

1. Provision of an efficient and effective operational service from SFRS to all Scottish communities, with particular regard for the distinct impacts the climate emergency is having and will continue to have on those communities, with the lowest impact upon the environment; and
2. Action regarding what more SFRS can do as an organisation to reduce its emissions, and increase Scotland's climate resilience in our just transition to net zero.

In February 2020, SFRS published its '[Climate Change Response Plan 2045](#)' and this work should continue at pace. A key focus within each SFRS Strategic Plan should continue to be delivering a world class and sustainable Service, enhancing partnership working and responding to the increasing climate emergency.

Climate Mitigation

There is no doubt that the global climate emergency is impacting every aspect of our Scottish communities. SFRS must do its part to mitigate the adverse impact of the climate emergency and help to keep our communities even safer. This can be achieved by structuring responses to climate policies, fostering collaborative and global discussions, reducing direct and indirect emissions, reducing its carbon footprint, incorporating climate action in its business strategies, procuring and constructing zero or low carbon buildings, utilising renewable energies such as solar, wind, hydro, biofuels and others, prevention of wildfires, and procuring zero emission vehicles whenever possible. These green initiatives are at the centre of the

transition to a less carbon-intensive and more sustainable SFRS, which supports Scotland's just transition to net zero emissions by 2045.

Increased Wildfires

Wildfires in the UK already cause substantial ecological and environmental damage and demand considerable and costly fire-management resources and different capabilities to address them. SFRS should continue to invest in the provision of specialist resources, technological advancements and forward thinking operational practices to enhance its response to wildfire events. SFRS should continue to make use of local assets available to bolster its response during prolonged or widespread incidents such as wildfire.

The Scottish Ministers require SFRS to continue to place a strong emphasis on partnership working and engaging with various agencies and groups in the rural and land management sectors to capitalise on its existing networks, expertise and influence (such as the Scottish Wildfire Forum, and the [Dynamic Coast](#) project). This will not only continue to enhance any intervention required, but will provide a strong platform for preventative work.

Increased Flooding

Flooding is a natural occurrence which can have devastating consequences on individuals, businesses and communities across Scotland. Climate change is predicted to increase Scotland's rainfall resulting in more severe and widespread flooding. Surface water flooding events, as seen in recent summers, can have a devastating impact in only a matter of hours. The Scottish Government is committed to reducing flood risk and working with relevant organisations to deliver actions that protect communities and businesses.

According to the latest Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk for the UK's third [Climate Change Risk Assessment \(CCRA3\)](#), "The risk of flooding to people, communities and buildings remains the most severe risk for Scotland, and is the costliest hazard to businesses."

According to the Scottish Government '[Living with Flooding: Action Plan](#)'; "In Scotland an estimated 284,000 homes and premises are at risk of flooding; with an additional 110,000 properties forecast to be at risk by the 2080s. Flooding can occur from a number of sources including coastal, water courses and surface water". SFRS should have regard to the 'Action Plan' to help promote property flood resilience in Scotland and should stand ready to respond to any flooding event efficiently providing the right resources at the right time to the right place.

SFRS should continue to strategically place specialist resources in areas where there is a greater risk of flooding (that is flood response stations, swift water rescue units, high volume pumping appliances which divert huge volumes of flood water), and ensure firefighters are prepared, fully equipped and ready to support and protect communities, whatever the weather.

SFRS should also ensure that the construction of any new buildings and new development undertaken by the Service is avoided in areas at risk from flooding. Where development must be located in these areas it should be designed to be capable of remaining operational and accessible during extreme flood events.

Leading the Response to Climate Change

SFRS should continue to be accountable and respond appropriately using a risk based approach that prioritises already vulnerable communities and individuals. SFRS should ensure that its actions are fair and equitable, taking account of existing social vulnerabilities and maintaining a strong focus on the summary of [Climate Projections for Scotland](#) and the UK's third [Climate Change Risk Assessment \(CCRA3\)](#), which was published in June 2021. SFRS must lead by example and act as enablers through its response to the global climate emergency.

SFRS should prioritise and take account of climate change mitigation and adaptation and report ongoing progress against these commitments in its annual reports, demonstrating how the Service is supporting Scotland's response to the global climate emergency.

Procurement

Since 2011, SFRS has had a legal duty to contribute to the delivery of Scotland's national emissions reduction targets, and the importance of procurement activity in this by public bodies has been enshrined in Scotland's climate law. The Scottish Government is committed to leveraging the £12.6 billion in annual public procurement spend to contribute towards the transition to a more resource efficient, lower zero carbon economy, through world leading climate change legislation. The Scottish Government is committed to supporting Scotland's Green Recovery and a just transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. Achieving Scotland's emissions reduction targets will require transformational actions across society, including by SFRS.

SFRS should continue to provide its innovative leadership and support this national endeavour through the strong action that it can take in relation to the annual public procurement spend. In all its investment decisions, such as buying new fleet, repairing and constructing buildings, SFRS should ensure that it complies with public bodies' sustainable procurement duty obligations to consider and act on opportunities to improve economic, social and environmental wellbeing in the course of its procurement activity, including ensuring a minimum burden on suppliers whilst ensuring robust consideration is given to this matter both with primary suppliers and throughout the supply chain. The net zero transition is at the heart of procurement decisions, with low carbon solutions given full consideration on an equal scale with operational requirement.

To enable traction and make the best use of scarce resources, SFRS should ensure that its teams are working collaboratively across traditional functional and professional boundaries to align climate-related policies, targets, milestones and supporting activities.

SFRS should set out in its Annual Procurement Strategy how it will prioritise and take account of climate change and the circular economy in its procurement activity and report ongoing progress against these commitments in its annual procurement reports, demonstrating how the Service is using procurement to support Scotland's response to the global climate emergency. This needs to explicitly address climate change and circular economy obligations.

To boost a green recovery and longer term climate ambitions, SFRS should stimulate action in public sector supply chains. Where SFRS decide to buy goods, services or works, it must champion innovative solutions, adopting a sustainable procurement approach to drive additional social and economic value throughout supply chains to reduce inequalities; enable Scottish businesses and the Third Sector to engage in supporting its climate ambitions; and work with the market to stimulate the development of new and emerging circular economy and low emission supply chains and solutions. This focus needs to extend beyond procurement activities and in to the wider policy initiatives that SFRS lead or fund through other means.

Future Direction

As Scotland continues to emerge from Covid19, SFRS has an opportunity to contribute towards a greener, fairer and more equal society and economy. An evolving and ever improving green recovery, in alignment with both existing and all future Scottish statutory frameworks, taking cognisance of all regulations and innovations being developed both now and in the future, will deliver economic, social and environmental wellbeing and respond to the twin challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss.

6. Strategic Priority 5 – Effective Governance and Performance

SFRS should ensure it has an effective approach to performance management to support robust scrutiny of the Service at national and local levels. This approach should be regularly reviewed and evaluated in pursuit of continuous improvement. SFRS should also collect, produce and analyse data and other intelligence to inform actions to promote the safety and well-being of communities, support operational efficiency and performance improvements (including its partnership contributions) and enable effective public reporting of performance.

Introduction

Effective governance, strong accountability and resilient performance are at the heart of good public services. SFRS should clearly contribute to [Scotland's National Outcomes](#).

SFRS must ensure that it meets the requirements of its governance and accountability arrangements as set out in the agreed [Scottish Government and SFRS Governance and Accountability Framework](#). It is also essential that SFRS effectively monitors and evaluates its performance in delivering the strategic priorities set out in this document. A key factor in achieving that delivery will be continued investment in maintaining the health, safety and well-being and improving the capabilities, capacity and performance of its workforce.

Context

SFRS should ensure it has an effective approach to performance management to support robust scrutiny of the Service at national and local levels. This approach should be regularly reviewed and evaluated in pursuit of continuous improvement. SFRS should also collect, produce and analyse data and other intelligence to promote the safety and well-being of communities, support operational efficiency and performance improvements (including its partnership contributions) and enable effective public reporting of performance.

Good service performance and effective accountability, both nationally and locally, is reliant on the ability to demonstrate the delivery of continuous improvement through comprehensive, timely performance reporting arrangements and a robust approach to analysis and evaluation. SFRS should continue to develop its performance systems to ensure the data collecting is still the most appropriate and it should report publicly on its key indicators on a regular basis. Reports should be open and transparent, and provide the Scottish Government and key stakeholders with accurate, timely and consistent data and information, from which they can assess whether SFRS's management arrangements are effective in ensuring it is performing well, providing value for money and delivering all across Scotland.

As set out in Strategic Priority 3 on 'Innovation and Modernisation', all proposed changes and improvements to the service SFRS provides should be made on the basis of sound evidence. SFRS performance management systems should therefore

play a critical role in providing that evidence and in turn driving improvement across the organisation.

SFRS should continue to develop methodologies and systems to collect, collate and analyse data in order to understand future trends and enable resources to be targeted where they are needed most and where they can add the greatest value. SFRS should ensure that it makes appropriate use of comparable data to benchmark its performance.

SFRS must, in discussion with the Scottish Government, specify appropriate performance measures to support its Strategic Plan, for the delivery of outcomes relating to the strategic priorities and objectives set out in this Framework.

SFRS should base its Annual Performance Review report on the priorities set out in this Framework in addition to the evidence obtained through its performance management systems. In order to ensure its activity is making a positive impact on outcomes for communities, SFRS should also monitor and report on its performance over a 3-5 year period.

SFRS should continue to ensure it is accountable to the communities it serves through its network of Local Senior Officers, local scrutiny committees and the involvement of Local Authority elected officials.

Best Value

[The 2005 Act](#) (as amended by [the 2012 Act](#)) sets out the duties of SFRS in securing Best Value for the people of Scotland. The delivery of an effective and efficient service is set within the context of establishing appropriate governance structures by which the organisation is directed and controlled to achieve objectives.

The '[Governance and Accountability Framework](#)', sets out the governance structures within which SFRS will operate and defines the key roles and responsibilities for SFRS and the Scottish Government. As set out in the Governance and Accountability Framework, SFRS should follow the guidance set out in the [Scottish Public Finance Manual](#) and be able to demonstrate fulfilment of its Best Value duty to secure continuous improvement in the performance of the organisation's functions.

To respond effectively to the changing public sector environment in Scotland and to meet the expectations set out in this Framework, SFRS should maintain its strong commitment to strategic and financial planning to assure the long term sustainability of the functions it delivers. SFRS should clearly communicate to internal and external stakeholders the outcomes it is working towards, what the intended objectives and goals of those outcomes are, and how its resources will be used efficiently and effectively to achieve those outcomes.

SFRS's Role as a Public Body

SFRS must follow the expectations and requirements set out in the Scottish Government [Public Bodies Guidance](#). As one of the larger public bodies in Scotland SFRS should be an exemplar organisation in terms of following good governance

and assurance, board members' and staff codes of conduct, succession planning and strategic engagement with government, other bodies and the third sector.

The SFRS Board provides strategic leadership for SFRS, which includes ensuring the highest standards of governance are complied with; that SFRS complies with all Ministerial guidance, its agreed Framework documents (including this document) and legislation; and that prudent and effective controls are in place to enable risks to be assessed and managed. The Chief Officer, with a full range of delegated responsibilities, gives the Board assurance on delivering its stated outcomes and objectives, as set out in the SFRS Strategic Plan. The Board, as the legal entity of SFRS, gives further assurance to Scottish Ministers that its outcomes and objectives have been realised by the Service.

The SFRS Board has responsibility to take into account the local needs, including the views of Local Authorities when providing governance and oversight of the response the Service provides. The Board should continue to build relationships with a wide range of stakeholders, including business and community groups.

SFRS should ensure its Board meetings are accessible to the public across the whole of Scotland and are carried out in the spirit of openness, including the publication of Board papers and minutes of proceedings.

SFRS's planning should ensure clear alignment of priorities and objectives as a national organisation while being flexible enough to respond to differing local needs across Scotland. It is essential to recognise the changing risks and threats facing communities in terms of the demands of its operating environment. SFRS should ensure its employees fully understand their individual and collective contribution to the organisation's objectives and know what is expected of them as part of its planning and operational delivery processes.

7. Strategic Priority 6 - People

SFRS should continue to be a Fair Work employer and develop as an employer of choice. It should promote the equality, safety and physical and mental health of all its staff. SFRS should continue to maximise the effectiveness of its approach to workforce and succession planning and should be a learning organisation with equal opportunities for all. SFRS should ensure it enables innovation and change through its People Strategy. SFRS should actively strive to be an organisation that is more representative of the people and communities of Scotland that it serves.

Introduction

SFRS should aim to have in place an appropriate workforce structure and systems which will prepare all those working in the Service, through robust and tailored development programmes, to develop its capability to meet current and future needs. SFRS should continue to actively develop the culture of the organisation to embrace the values of being inclusive, diverse and fair and ensure these are fully embedded across the whole workforce. To do this, the Service must invest in its current workforce and plan for the type of workforce it will need in the future.

Scotland's Fair Work Approach

The Scottish Government's vision, shared by the Fair Work Convention, is for Scotland to be a leading Fair Work Nation by 2025. The strategic ambitions for Fair Work are set out in the [Fair Work Convention's Framework](#), which underpins the government's [Fair Work Action Plan](#). As a public body, SFRS is expected to take a leading role in adopting and promoting Fair Work, by applying the fair work criteria to drive improvement, namely: appropriate channels for effective voice, such as trade union recognition; investment in workforce development; no inappropriate use of zero hours contracts; action to tackle the gender pay gap and create a more diverse and inclusive workplace; and continued payment of the real Living Wage.

SFRS adapted quickly to the need for staff to work from home whenever possible during the Covid19 pandemic including making best use of technology to facilitate this change. It should build on the lessons learned from the flexible working arrangements and use of technology which were developed during this period in considering future flexible working patterns for staff.

SFRS will also be expected to adopt further criteria that the Scottish Government may introduce to address particular labour market challenges as the economy evolves.

Skills and Changing Needs

SFRS should consider what skills its workforce may need to acquire or develop further in order to maximise their contribution to the Service's modernisation and to meet the changing needs of local communities. SFRS must ensure that the workforce maintains competence to deliver core duties in addition to developing

skills to meet the changing requirements of the services it delivers, thus maximising its ability to contribute to improved outcomes for the communities and people of Scotland. It should consider the right mix of expertise in fire and rescue and corporate functions to best deliver a forward looking 21st Century Fire and Rescue Service.

SFRS must ensure its operational firefighters are properly trained and equipped to undertake the professional duties it expects of them. It is therefore essential that SFRS regularly reviews training capacity against demand. SFRS should ensure there is sufficient training capacity and investment in people and resources to ensure staff are competent in any new or adapted roles they will be expected to undertake.

SFRS staff deal with a broad range of the public often in challenging and dangerous situations, so it is essential that its staff are trauma informed and recognise the importance of being person focused in the services they provide. It is crucial that all levels of staff in SFRS treat each other and those they serve, with dignity and respect along with recognising the importance of diversity and this should be reflected in the training staff receive.

To maximise the impact of training whilst minimising the time spent away from operational duties, SFRS should ensure its whole workforce, wherever in Scotland they are based, have full access to the training and development they need to deliver their role.

In adapting and developing services, the skills needed by staff will change over time, and it is therefore crucial that SFRS considers future needs as it evolves its learning and development functions.

SFRS should look to develop training in collaboration with other blue light partners. This is particularly relevant for strategic leadership training and other aspects common across the partners.

Learning

As a learning organisation, SFRS must identify opportunities for learning from its past actions, including operational incidents, and ensure that lessons learned are shared across the organisation and become embedded in future behaviour.

SFRS should work in partnership with other organisations to maximise learning and sharing of best practice, including joint multi-agency debriefing and training for responding to a range of incidents. It is crucial that SFRS not only identifies learning but also integrates that learning into long term change and improvement. It therefore needs to embrace a culture of openness to learn from past actions, particularly with a focus on the outcomes of those actions.

Succession and Workforce Planning

Succession plans, acknowledging the skills, experience and knowledge that it will require in the future should be developed in the context of SFRS's own Strategic Plan and the Strategic People and Organisational Development Plan and should

provide value in wider organisational business planning than just recruitment. SFRS is facing an aging workforce and must ensure it does not lose expertise and corporate memory when staff retire. As a fair work employer, SFRS must engage with trade unions and directly with staff along with utilising appropriate internal and external expertise in designing and delivering its succession plans. The Service should set out what it will do, how it will do it and how it will monitor progress, recognising existing strengths.

Health, Wellbeing and Safety

Operational fire and rescue activity does come with risks to firefighter safety and in carrying out those activities, firefighters can be exposed to dangers and traumatic experiences. In addition, the Covid19 pandemic has added further stress and anxiety to everyone's lives, with many people suffering from bereavement. SFRS should continue to give the highest priority to the safety, physical and mental health and well-being of its staff and those they serve and protect by encouraging a culture of health and well-being; and by providing and maintaining systems to support and enhance well-being and safety at work.

SFRS should ensure that it takes a collaborative approach on matters of staff safety, health and mental well-being, and that participation and involvement of employees and their representatives is undertaken when identifying, resolving and improving policy and related practice. This should ensure that workforce development, promoting health and well-being and harmonious industrial relations remain priorities.

Equalities and Human Rights

SFRS must, in terms of its obligations under the [Human Rights Act 1998](#), act in accordance with the [European Convention for Human Rights](#). SFRS must also comply with the [Equality Act 2010](#) and the [Equality Act 2010 \(Specific Duties\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2012](#). Under the general duty within the Equality Act 2010, SFRS must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people that do not share it. The regulations further specify the actions public bodies are expected to take in meeting this duty. SFRS should ensure that its strategic planning, decision making and reporting demonstrates how equality issues are considered, including as an element of SFRS's improvement processes.

SFRS must ensure that equality is mainstreamed across all functions of the Service. SFRS must set, review and report on progress of equality outcomes designed to meet the aims of workforce and board diversity and service provision. Information on the profile of personnel across the protected characteristics must be monitored and reported on, together with other relevant information such as the gender pay gap. SFRS must ensure publication of a statement outlining policies on equal pay between men and women, persons who are disabled and who are not, and persons who fall into a minority racial group and persons who do not. SFRS should also continue to develop systems and processes that will ensure that the equality performance of suppliers is assessed through the procurement process. As part of

its work to address equality issues, SFRS should remain an accredited Living Wage Employer and encourage the uptake of Modern Apprentices across the organisation in recognition of wider Scottish Government aspirations.

Building on SFRS Equality and Diversity Charter and the Scottish Government's Fair Work principles, SFRS should work towards achieving the Scottish Government's ambition of a fairer society with a diverse operational workforce. SFRS should promote workforce diversity through positive action on recruitment, retention and promotion to encourage greater involvement of under-represented groups to develop a workforce that greater reflects the population of Scotland in terms of characteristics such as sex, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability and gender reassignment. SFRS should support youth employment and engage and contribute with other organisations that support youth employment.

SFRS should continually benchmark against other Fire and Rescue Services and similar emergency services along with other public bodies and private organisations to ensure it is leading the way on equality outcomes along with making sure learning and initiatives are taken on board.

Historically firefighters were predominately male and SFRS has been working towards the aim of a balanced workforce with an increase in the number of female firefighters. Despite efforts over recent years to address these equality issues, work needs to continue in this regard and SFRS will require to have a sustained effort over the coming years to achieve a fully balanced workforce. There is clear consensus that increasing diversity in the Boardroom and in senior leadership roles encourages new and innovative thinking, maximises use of talent and leads to better business decisions and governance. The Scottish Government encourages public, private and third sector organisations to sign up to the [Partnerships for Change](#). Succession planning is critical to ensure that Boards have the skills and diversity of contribution they need to address future challenges and priorities. A key challenge for SFRS is to identify its Board's skills and diversity requirements over the medium and long-term as part of its corporate planning process, and develop a strategy for meeting these. Aligning the profile of skills of the Board members with the Strategic Plan will ensure that the Board has the right skills to deal with future business as the work of the Service evolves; and importantly how the Service plans to ensure that happens.

8. Strategic Priority 7 - Partnership

Working with others such as other blue light emergency services, public, private and voluntary organisations and Scotland's communities should be ingrained throughout SFRS. This includes, but goes beyond, the important and statutory work undertaken through the established Community Planning Partnerships. SFRS partnerships should develop joined up policies to multidimensional problems. Innovative leadership should be provided to facilitate the identification of collaborative opportunities, making the best use of public resources. The aims should be to achieve community safety, drive out inefficiencies, where possible, whilst achieving operational efficiencies and effectiveness to ultimately improve outcomes for our Scottish communities.

Introduction

The main purpose of SFRS is to work in partnership with communities and with others in the public, private and third sectors, on prevention, protection and response, to improve the safety and well-being of people throughout Scotland. This section sets out the context, the future vision and strategic direction from Scottish Ministers for SFRS in relation to partnership working. Collaboration and partnership working are interchangeable terms used frequently throughout this Framework.

Context

SFRS must consider how it best designs and delivers services and interventions, how it successfully operates in partnership with other public services and with communities and how it will achieve financial efficiencies in order to more widely reduce the demands and cost pressures on other public services. Further collaboration with partners should provide the opportunity to establish new working practices that deliver the public safety priorities of our communities across prevention, protection, response and resilience activities. Use of effective and innovative partnership working, helping people to work across organisational boundaries to achieve positive results should continue.

Legislative Responsibilities

Public Service Reform is founded on the benefits of working collaboratively, across organisational boundaries, ensuring services are shaped around the needs and demands of individuals and communities – with a clear focus on prevention and early intervention to achieve outcomes.

On-going reform within SFRS should continue to reflect the underpinning aims of [Christie](#) and the Scottish Government's Public Service Reform agenda which is about improving outcomes, tackling inequalities and empowering communities in sustainable ways and building up the strong pillars of Christie which includes a robust focus on partnership working.

SFRS has a statutory duty to work with others in the community planning arrangements under section 4 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. SFRS also has a statutory duty to work with partners to prepare for and respond to

and recover from emergencies under the [Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#) and associated regulations. SFRS is listed as a public authority in relation to the [Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#) and as such, will continue to play its part in improving outcomes for communities by enhancing the process of community planning and ensuring that local service providers work with communities to meet the needs of the people who use its services.

SFRS also attend a variety of water-related incidents. Scotland has more than 27,000 lochs, over 11,800km of coastal water and more than 120,000km of rivers and streams, providing many hectares of often deep or swiftly moving water to which the public have easy access (90% of the standing volume of freshwater in the UK lies within Scotland). SFRS should continue its leading role with Water Safety Scotland working with partners to prevent fatalities in Scotland's waters.

SFRS is also a statutory Community Justice Partner under the [Community Justice \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#). As such, SFRS contribute to the local strategic planning, monitoring and delivery of community justice outcomes and is jointly accountable for this.

[The Islands \(Scotland\) Act 2018](#) provided for the creation of a National Islands Plan and a duty to island-proof future government policies, strategies and legislation. Since then, a [Local Governance Review](#) has created further opportunities for SFRS, its local partners and communities across the country to work together in partnership to propose alternative governance arrangements which can improve outcomes and drive inclusive growth for communities. SFRS should fulfil all of these partnership obligations to best effect.

Data Innovation to Deliver Better Outcomes

SFRS should use data to drive continuous performance improvement. Positive use of data improves people's wellbeing and saves time, money and lives (for example, during the Covid19 pandemic, the Scottish Government's Digital Directorate used data to ensure the optimal locations for Covid19 testing and vaccination centres). It helps to see patterns that are not immediately obvious, which enables getting to the real causes of problems. It allows understanding of how life is experienced by people from different backgrounds and design services to be equitable, and enables examination of the impact that services are having so that adjustment and reform leads to improvement. Consistent flows of information and data innovation to deliver better outcomes are also essential for achieving effective collaboration.

SFRS should continue to develop, accelerate and encourage the use of common digital and data standards across the public sector which will facilitate the joining up of services for the benefit of the people who use and need them. Therefore clear processes and systems for working with partners such as the NHS, specifically on how data can be used to improve services, are required to identify the most vulnerable communities, and most vulnerable individuals within communities, to target activity where it is most needed and to make an effective contribution to tackling inequalities. However there are known challenges and barriers that exist in relation to cross public service data sharing. The Service should endeavour to work

against these barriers to ensure potential resistance to sharing data is both recognised and overcome.

Future Vision – Working with Others

There is much to be achieved by working collaboratively and utilising effective partnerships, by further use of multi-agency working, research collaborations, networking and joint working; all of which should take into account the specific and unique risks facing Scotland, including those that are out with SFRS's direct control.

SFRS and the Scottish Ambulance Service Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest co-responding trials were an excellent example of public services working together to achieve a common aim that improves outcomes for communities. SFRS should continue its work to respond in emergency to help those in Scotland who suffer a cardiac arrest in the community and to develop new ways of working together with other services to achieve further enhancements to delivery of emergency medical response.

More partnership working by SFRS with the Scottish Ambulance Service, the NHS and other partners will be important in ensuring people's safety and wellbeing. We know from other UK-wide trials between 2015 and 2017, and longstanding international experience, that a swifter emergency medical response can yield better outcomes and significant savings in terms of less need for prolonged hospitalisation or dependence on long-term care. There may also be scope for firefighters to respond to other types of emergency medical cases (such as opioid related incidents), subject to further consideration of the clinical evidence, engagement with relevant healthcare professionals, and meeting relevant training and welfare requirements for firefighters. SFRS should aim to make maximum use of the specific skills and capabilities that firefighters have to secure better health outcomes and the more efficient and effective use of resources.

SFRS should continue to work in partnership with the Reform Collaboration Group partners to provide a strategic approach to looking at ways in which shared outcomes, and delivery of services to our communities can be improved and achieve better value for the public purse. SFRS should work with the partners to continue to fully exploit opportunities to deliver efficiencies through collaborative working for example in sharing services for fleet procurement and maintenance or establishing the infrastructure for low carbon vehicles. Increased and focused collaboration at an early stage in the strategic planning process is required so that more integrated and innovative approaches can be identified and delivered.

The ongoing establishment, maintenance and development of engagement with, for example, parts of Scottish Government (such as Better Homes, Building Standards and Scottish Government Digital Directorate), local authorities, emergency responders, other community planning agencies, voluntary organisations and businesses remains key to the successful delivery of SFRS's objectives and priorities.

In all decisions involving new investment of capital resources, particularly on buildings, fleet and fleet maintenance, consideration of any collaborative

opportunities must be explored with others. SFRS already has a strong record of working closely with Scottish Ambulance Service and other response partners to share fire station space and this should continue to be developed wherever possible.

SFRS should continue undertaking collaborative procurement opportunities with all of its partners, wherever possible, especially considering interoperability requirements. The development of electric vehicle charging infrastructure and the procurement of electric vehicles is a good example of this collaborative work with other emergency services and local partners.

Partnership Working in Emergencies

SFRS is defined as a Category 1 responder in the [Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#). The guidance around that, to assist to collaboratively assess, plan, respond and recover from emergency events, is set out in '[Preparing Scotland](#)' which contains established good practice based on professional expertise, legislation and lessons learned from previous emergencies. Partnership working around emergencies is at the centre of the resilience arrangements in Scotland and SFRS is well embedded in existing Resilience Partnership structures. SFRS continues to play a significant part in discussions at the established multi-agency resilience forums at all levels – nationally, at the Strategic Resilience Partnership, regionally, at all three Regional Resilience Partnerships in the North, East and West partnership areas of Scotland and more locally at the Local Resilience Partnerships, as well as at relevant individual resilience subgroups, as required.

SFRS should continue developing a shared understanding with both local and national partners of their relative roles, responsibilities and capabilities, to ensure that when emergencies do occur, they are responded to and concluded as effectively and efficiently as possible, and in an interoperable manner. Furthermore, when working with partners and understanding the dynamics of those partnerships, lessons should be learned in the spirit of continual improvement when better ways of working are identified as a result of working together. Community Planning Partnerships, local scrutiny arrangements and the Voluntary Sector Resilience Partnership, which brings category 1 responders together with the Scottish Government, Resilience Partnerships and key Voluntary and Community sector colleagues provide ideal forums for such discussions and the process should ensure that decisions are informed by local engagement.

However it is equally important that local partners also own their commitments and methods of working together and do not simply collaborate together because they are being encouraged to do so; it must also make good business sense to collaborate where partners choose to do so. SFRS should view community planning as an opportunity to engage with a range of partners and pool collective resources in order to drive improvements in outcomes.

SFRS should work in partnership with City Regions and Community Wealth Building Projects in support of its '[Long-Term Vision](#)' and Strategic Planning requirements. These packages of funding and decision making powers, agreed between the Scottish Government, the UK Government and local partners, are designed to bring about long-term strategic partnership approaches to improving regional economies,

aiming to help harness additional investment, create new jobs and accelerate inclusive economic growth. They are implemented by regional partners and overseen by the [Scottish City Region and Growth Deal Delivery Board](#). Each deal is tailored to its city region, reflecting its individual economic strengths and weaknesses, and comprises a programme of interventions to support positive, transformative change.

There is clearly a strong need for effective leadership, governance and performance management in developing and maintaining partnerships. SFRS should provide innovative leadership, good governance and should relay the clear joint ambitions of increased and focused collaboration when setting up all partnership initiatives. SFRS should actively drive new and existing collaboration forward.

Partnerships across the Wider Scottish Public Sector

SFRS should aim to work with its partners towards achieving a Digital Scotland in which geography, background or ability is no barrier to getting online, in which public services are reinvented to make them more personal, accountable, adaptable, efficient, sustainable and worthy of public trust, and in which businesses and third sector partners are empowered and supported to embrace the advantages of digital technology. In order to deliver a citizen focussed Service, SFRS should continue to develop its interaction and communications with the public. For example, when developing its website, its social media presence, any interactive applications and engaging with young Scottish citizens, SFRS should look to put the user at the heart of its service design.

SFRS should look to develop opportunities for new partnerships as well as continuing to build on the strong links it has already developed with its partners, including building upon more integration with voluntary sector resilience partners in order to identify and tackle national and local risk-based priorities. SFRS should also continue its collaborative work, including its participation in and contribution to work focused on reducing unintentional physical and psychological harm that could have been predicted or prevented. SFRS should continue to implement agreements for sharing premises, assets and services with emergency service partners, including with Police Scotland and the Scottish Ambulance Service where it could help protect public service provision within a community or contribute to better local or national outcomes.

SFRS should continue to be innovative in its thinking and should continue to consider new approaches to improving the safety of Scottish communities. SFRS should continue to work closely with individuals and communities to gain a much deeper understanding of their needs, to maximise talents and resources, to support self-reliance and build resilience across the organisation. A key asset SFRS should factor in when doing this is the positive relationship and trust it continues to enjoy with the public. When considering what additional tasks firefighters might undertake in the future, both collaboratively and in partnership with other emergency responders and partners, as well as separately as firefighters in their own right, SFRS should maintain effective relationships with trade unions and their partnership approach with employees, negotiating bodies and the Scottish Government.

9. Annex 1 – SFRS Strategic Priorities

It should be noted that the order of the priorities does not denote their level of importance. All priorities are of equal importance.

Strategic Priority 1 – Prevention and Protection

The overriding purpose of SFRS remains to improve the safety and well-being of communities. A priority for SFRS is preventing fires and reducing their human, social and economic impact. SFRS should use an evidence-based approach to target groups and individuals according to risk, and universal population wide activities, to improve fire and wider community safety. These should contribute to reducing inequality and encouraging sustainable and inclusive growth. SFRS should work with public, private and voluntary organisations; communities and individuals where they can add value and contribute to outcomes.

Strategic Priority 2 – Response

In conjunction with effectively addressing risk, SFRS should ensure that the capability of its assets and staff, combined with technological improvements, enable it to respond to incidents with the right resources at the right time across communities in Scotland. The Service should embrace a flexible, innovative and inclusive approach to its service delivery and resilience planning, ensuring its response resources and crewing arrangements are aligned to current and future risks.

Strategic Priority 3 – Innovation and Modernisation

SFRS should continually improve and modernise the service it provides so that it can do more to improve outcomes for communities across Scotland. Modernisation proposals should be considered, developed and delivered using sound evidence and should include but not be limited to ensuring SFRS is using its people, assets and financial resources in the most efficient and effective manner and that the role of firefighters is modernised to allow the Service to address new and emerging risks in our communities.

Strategic Priority 4 – Climate Change

SFRS should continue working with other public sector partners and communities to support action to address the climate emergency including the challenges of more extreme weather events. SFRS should do so by preventing and reducing its own greenhouse gas emissions and working to ensure Scotland's communities are resilient and safe in response to the changing climate. SFRS's corporate response to the climate emergency should include, for example, commitment towards transitioning over to ultra-low emission fleets, renewable energy and heat; low carbon buildings and materials; and wherever possible, maximising the positive impact procurement can have on addressing the climate emergency.

Strategic Priority 5 – Effective Governance and Performance

SFRS should ensure it has an effective approach to performance management to support robust scrutiny of the Service at national and local levels. This approach should be regularly reviewed and evaluated in pursuit of continuous improvement. SFRS should also collect, produce and analyse data and other intelligence to inform actions to promote the safety and well-being of communities, support operational efficiency and performance improvements (including its partnership contributions) and enable effective public reporting of performance.

Strategic Priority 6 – People

SFRS should continue to be a Fair Work employer and develop as an employer of choice. It should promote the equality, safety and physical and mental health of all its staff. SFRS should continue to maximise the effectiveness of its approach to workforce and succession planning and should be a learning organisation with equal opportunities for all. SFRS should ensure it enables innovation and change through its People Strategy. SFRS should actively strive to be an organisation that is more representative of the people and communities of Scotland that it serves.

Strategic Priority 7 – Partnership

Working with others such as other blue light emergency services, public, private and voluntary organisations and Scotland's communities should be ingrained throughout SFRS. This includes, but goes beyond, the important and statutory work undertaken through the established Community Planning Partnerships. SFRS partnerships should develop joined up policies to multidimensional problems. Innovative leadership should be provided to facilitate the identification of collaborative opportunities, making the best use of public resources. The aims should be to achieve community safety, drive out inefficiencies, where possible, whilst achieving operational efficiencies and effectiveness to ultimately improve outcomes for our Scottish communities.



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This publication is available at www.gov.scot

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The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-80435-102-4 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, March 2022

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS1031358 (03/22)

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