



Report to: Midlothian Police and Fire and Rescue Board

Subject: Local Fire Plan Development

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the Midlothian Police and Fire and Rescue Board views on the development of the next iteration of the Midlothian Local Fire Plan.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The current, and first, Midlothian Local Fire Plan 2014-17 (the Plan) was approved through local scrutiny arrangements in March 2014. The Plan is a 3 year plan and is due to expire at the end of March 2017. A hyperlink to the Plan is attached to Appendix I for information. ([http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/media/610220/sfrs\\_local\\_plan\\_midlothian\\_v1.pdf](http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/media/610220/sfrs_local_plan_midlothian_v1.pdf))
- 2.2 The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) has a statutory responsibility through the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 to prepare local plans for each local authority area. There is no legislatively prescribed timespan for local plans therefore they may be reviewed and revised at any time. However, a mandatory review of local plans is required should certain events occur, such as the approval of a new Scottish Government SFRS Fire Framework or SFRS Strategic Plan or a review of the local authority community planning arrangements.
- 2.4 The Scottish Government has developed a new draft SFRS Fire Framework which sets of Scottish Government Ministers expectations of the Service. The draft Fire Framework provides SFRS with strategic priorities and objectives, together with guidance on how the delivery of its functions contribute to the Government's purpose. The framework has been published for consultation with the consultation period closing on the 15<sup>th</sup> of June 2016. It is anticipated that the Fire Framework will be published in the near future.
- 2.5 To ensure SFRS organisational priorities and objectives align with the SFRS Fire Framework, and other expectations placed on public bodies through community planning legislation, the SFRS has developed a draft Strategic Plan for 2016-19. The draft Strategic Plan is currently going through a 10 week consultation period which concludes in August 2016. It is envisaged that the SFRS Strategic Plan will be published in October 2016.
- 2.6 Midlothian's Community Planning Partnership Board is currently reviewing the local Single Outcome Agreement and supporting community planning partnership arrangements to take cognisance of the requirements of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 to have in place a Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans.
- 2.7 A number of Community Planning Partners in the Midlothian area have undergone significant organisational change in the last year (e.g. Health and Social Care Integration and Community Justice re-design) and these partners future strategies and plans are currently in their infancy and yet to become fully embedded in the community planning process.
- 2.8 On the 28<sup>th</sup> of April 2016 the SFRS Board approved a report proposing that Local Fire Plan development, production and introduction for the 32 local authorities is staggered as opposed to all plans being produced at the same time. A fundamental principle of the Board report is

the acknowledgement that ownership of Local Fire Plans lies with local authorities and it is imperative that Local Senior Officers engage with these stakeholders to gauge the appetite and acceptance of the proposal to stagger, and thereby potentially delay, the production of a Local Plan for their area. A copy of the Board report is attached to Appendix II of this report.

### **3 Local Plan Development and Introduction**

3.1 In recognising that the Midlothian Local Fire Plan (the Plan) must reflect national organisational priorities and objectives and meet community needs and expectations, from a local perspective, there are a range of drivers that would support an argument to delay production of the Plan. These main drivers are;

- There are benefits in waiting until the Scottish Governments Fire Framework and the SFRS Strategic Plan are embedded before developing the Plan,
- Anecdotal evidence gained from discussions with key stakeholders and empirical evidence gained from analysis of performance against the current Plan indicates that with the exception of capturing elements of Service transformation activities, the Plan is fit for purpose and continues to reflect the main priorities and objectives of the stakeholders and communities in the local area,
- There are benefits in waiting for the revised Midlothian Single Outcome Agreement (Local Outcome Improvement Plan) and Neighbourhood Action Plans (Locality Plans) to become fully embedded before developing the Plan,
- There are benefits in waiting until Midlothian Community Planning Partners emerging or developing strategic priorities are further embedded before developing the Plan,
- Cognisance is required to be taken of the forthcoming local government elections planned for May 2017, and the possibility of a new administration inheriting a Plan that has just been approved by an antecedent administration.

3.2 Taking into consideration the issues raised in section 3.1 of this report the Local Senior Officer for Midlothian, East Lothian & Scottish Borders proposes that the current Plan is extended until December 2017. The extension of the Plan will allow the following Plan development timeline to be adopted.

- Monitor and horizon scan emerging SFRS organisational, and external stakeholders, strategic priorities, objectives and plans (June -Dec 2016),
- Conduct in depth data analysis of local activity/incidents and emerging risks to inform local priorities and needs in the Midlothian area (Jan -March 2017),
- Engage with key stakeholders, partners and members of the community on 1<sup>st</sup> tranche priorities, objectives and expectations (April-June 2017),
- Develop new draft Plan for Midlothian (May-July 2017),
- Consult with key stakeholders, partners and members of the community on the draft Plan (August -October 2017),
- Submit draft Plan to Midlothian for Council approval (Nov-December 2017).

4. **Conclusion**

4.1 The Midlothian Police and Fire and Rescue Board is asked to;

- Note or otherwise the content of this report,
- Approve or otherwise the proposal to extend the current Midlothian Local Fire Plan until December 2017,
- Approve or otherwise the proposed timeline to develop the next iteration of the Midlothian Local Fire Plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D W Farries', with a stylized flourish at the end.

David W Farries

Local Senior Officer

Midlothian, East Lothian & Scottish Borders

August 2016

## **Appendix I: Link to Midlothian Local Fire Plan**

[http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/media/610220/sfrs\\_local\\_plan\\_midlothian\\_v1.pdf](http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/media/610220/sfrs_local_plan_midlothian_v1.pdf)

2014-17 Midlothian Local Fire Plan

## Appendix II: Scottish Fire & Rescue Service Board Report, Local Plan Production.

[http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/media/933654/11\\_20160428b.sppc.04\\_16localplandevelopmentapproach.pdf](http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/media/933654/11_20160428b.sppc.04_16localplandevelopmentapproach.pdf)

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Agenda  
Item: 11



**SCOTTISH**  
**FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**  
Working together for a safer Scotland

Report to:	THE BOARD OF THE SCOTTISH FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE
Report No:	B/SPCC/04-16
Date:	28 APRIL 2016
Report By:	MARK MCATEER, DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC PLANNING, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNICATIONS

Subject:	LOCAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT
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### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to seek Board member support for a revised approach to the development of Local Plans.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Board members are asked to:
  - a. Support the principles of a staggered production of Local Plans
  - b. Agree to approach local authorities to establish their views; and
  - c. Agree to receive a further report on our review findings.

### 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The SFRS has a statutory responsibility to prepare Local Plans for each Local Authority. There is no legislatively prescribed timespan for Local Plans so they may be reviewed and revised at any time.
- 3.2 However, a mandatory review is required should certain events occur, such as the approval of a new Strategic Plan. This year, as a result of the development of a new Strategic Plan, all 32 Local Plans will be reviewed. As these were published to cover a 3 year timespan there is an expectation they will be replaced by April 2017.
- 3.3 Engagement on what these Local Plans may look like has been aligned to the consultation timeline of the Strategic Plan. To capitalise on this approach, robust joint engagement and consultation activity has been planned and is set to commence in May 2016.

- 3.4 As well as a comprehensive internal and external communications campaign invitations to meet with Local Senior Officers will be extended to key local partners across Scotland. This is to encourage open dialogue to discuss our national strategy, look at how this can be adopted to meet local needs and at the same time explore practical ways in which the SFRS can add more value to improve community outcomes. A similar approach will be taken at corporate level and where practicable we will exploit opportunities to engage with partners collaboratively at joint forums or events.

#### **4. DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 4.1 The review of Local Plans will seek to assess what differences we have made and to determine what we need to focus on in the years to come for continued improvement of community safety and wellbeing. When we engage with local stakeholders we will use this opportunity to ask them what they think about our performance as well as future priorities to inform the review.
- 4.2 Through the National Risk Reduction Project the Service is also making strides in gathering data to enable a wider, more holistic analysis of community risk. Local assessment of risk is currently being developed in pilot areas with the view of extending this across Scotland once the most effective methods of collation assessment and mitigating action planning have been identified.
- 3.3 With the introduction of new legislative requirements and initiatives such as community empowerment, health and social care integration and community justice, local areas are seeing significant changes in how local partners need to plan and work collaboratively to improve community outcomes.

#### **5. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS**

- 5.1 The developments relating to local partner plans and our local assessment of risk have a positive influence on the development of our Local Plans. In order to benefit more from these influences it is proposed to allow these to evolve further and stagger production of Local Plans beyond April 2017.
- 5.2 This proposal will allow more time to consider the best method to integrate the work of the National Risk Reduction Project with local planning. Creating a holistic picture of community needs across Scotland can then be used to explore how best to design and deploy local resources for the greatest positive results.



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- 5.3 In addition, through using this measured approach to developing our Local Plans we can be more flexible to allow for greater integration with local partner plans. These include Local Outcome Improvement Plans (formerly known as Single Outcome Agreements), Health and Social Care Strategies and Community Justice Plans which are in their infancy or still under development.
- 5.4 The development of 32 Local Plans at the same time presents a considerable corporate challenge. Staggering development over the summer of 2017 would generate more space for a greater focus on each individual Plan and the specific local needs it serves to address.
- 5.5 It is also proposed that on publication Local Plans will not specify a timespan but rather be subject to regular review. The flexibility of this approach will allow Local Plans to support service re-design and be more reactive to local needs and changing circumstances.
- 5.6 It is acknowledged that there will be an expectation, particularly by local authorities, that Local Plans will be revised by April 2017. Should the principles of a staggered approach be agreed, Local Senior Officers will discuss our approach with local authority officers to manage this expectation gauge and to appetite and acceptance.
- 5.7 The engagement and review exercises are to conclude in early August. The results of these will be used to identify which areas we need to focus attention on first. This risk based methodology will ensure that where significant refocus is required this will be addressed as a priority. A report to outline our findings will be presented to a future Board meeting.

## 6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications associated with the recommendations of this report.

## 7 EMPLOYEE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are significant resources required for the development of Local Plans. Development will be managed through existing Strategic Planning and Performance and Communications Directorate and Local Senior Officer teams.

## 8 LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 As the SFRS has a statutory requirement to prepare Local Plans, legislative responsibilities have been fully considered within development plans.
- 8.2 Legal guidance received is supportive of the proposed approach which will see the introduction of revised Local Plans beyond April 2017.

**9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 9.1 As this report does not propose a change in policy, the formal adoption of a plan, policy or strategy it is not necessary to complete an impact assessment. Each Local Plan will undergo a full Equality Impact Assessment as they go through production.

**10 CORE BRIEF**

- 10.1 Rather than revising all 32 Local Plans for April 2017, Board members are asked to support a staggered approach which will see the introduction of revised Local Plans beyond April 2017. This approach allows time for integration with local partner planning arrangements and for the National Risk Reduction Project to evolve further to provide a more informed platform from which to develop Local Plans. Good engagement with local partners is critical to the success of this project and a strong focus on this will be maintained.

**Mark McAteer**  
Director of Strategic Planning, Performance and Communications

28 April 2016