

**Working together
for a safer Scotland**



**SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Working together for a safer Scotland

MIDLOTHIAN AREA

LOCAL COMMUNITY FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN REVIEW 2020

Safety. Teamwork. Respect. Innovation.

Introduction

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is required under the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005, as amended by the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, to prepare Local Fire and Rescue Plans for each local authority in Scotland. Our first Local Fire and Rescue Plans were published in April 2014. These were reviewed and replaced in 2017/18.

These Plans were developed to direct the Service through its initial transformation journey and to forge our place as a national organisation with a strong sense of local accountability. Against the drive of public sector reform, the local planning landscape continues to evolve to tackle inequalities and improve community outcomes through strong and open collaborative working.

The publication of our new Strategic Plan 2019-22 in October 2019 has instigated a requirement to carry out a mandatory review of all Local Fire and Rescue Plans. This review will provide us with information on how well we are performing against our existing priorities as well as highlighting areas for continued improvement and opportunities for change against the growing needs of our communities.

Performance Data – what the figures told us

Key performance indicator	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	YTD
All accidental dwelling fires	60	75	60	52	69	◆
All fire casualties (fatal & non-fatal (incl. p/c's))	10	17	15	15	10	●
All deliberate fires excl. dwellings	276	399	412	326	234	●
Special Service - RTCs	47	39	42	29	37	◆
Special Service Casualties - All	61	50	54	32	56	◆
False Alarm - UFAs	306	380	362	375	385	▲

RAG rating - KEY		
◆	RED DIAMOND	10% higher than the previous YTD period, or local target not achieved.
▲	YELLOW TRIANGLE	Up to 9% higher than the previous YTD period, or local target not achieved.
●	GREEN CIRCLE	Equal to or improved upon the previous equivalent quarter (or YTD period), or local target achieved.

Local Priorities

1. As part of a Community Partnership approach, we will make people safer in their homes.

To progress this priority, we have continued to develop links with community partners, including care and housing providers as well as others, to identify and offer home fire safety advice to the most vulnerable in our community. The performance measures of *dwelling fires* and *all fire casualties* show that despite the efforts and resources used to deliver on the priority there is still further improvements to be made. The priority also gives ourselves and our

partners scope to develop further work in relation to home safety in similar initiatives to the “Living Safely in the Home” pilot project in Midlothian. This priority is fit for purpose.

2. We will promote Community Resilience whilst contributing to improved outcomes for people involved in non-fire emergencies.

Community resilience from a non-fire emergency perspective is provided by the 2 community fire stations in Midlothian at Penicuik and Dalkeith. With a scalable response the SFRS can provide resources to assist other agencies as well as responding to water rescue and flooding incidents with specialist swift water rescue teams. The *Special Service Road Traffic Collision (RTC)* and *Special Service Casualties* performance measures combined demonstrate the outcomes from this priority and although the number of casualties are declining there is more to do in this area. With the potential to return to the out of hospital cardiac arrest workstream, previously piloted in areas of Scotland, this priority is still fit for purpose as it will allow development of any new work combined with the existing work in response to non-fire emergencies as previously stated.

3. Together with our Community Partners, we will contribute to making roads in Midlothian safer.

By providing trained and equipped firefighters to respond across Midlothian to deal with road traffic collisions (RTCs) the SFRS contributes to improving outcomes for those involved. The performance measures mentioned above with priority 2 are also useful for this priority and demonstrate this is suitable as an ongoing focus for our work. The partnership road safety activities will continue to be supported by the SFRS as safer roads are a local priority for Midlothian and this priority is still fit for purpose.

4. As part of a Community Partnership, we will challenge anti-social behaviour.

We will continue to work with young people in Midlothian to provide opportunities to support their development and life skills. Successes, stemming from the work with the Y2K project in Mayfield, will be developed with the hope that the impact of deliberate fire raising can be better understood and some peer education can assist in reducing the burden on those affected. The deliberate fires performance measure is used as a gauge for anti-social behaviour and although useful may not give a true reflection of the positive impacts some of our youth work can have on the wider community. This priority is still important to the SFRS and local communities and it is recommended to be maintained within a plan revision.

5. In partnership, we will aim to reduce the occurrence and impact of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals.

Unwanted fire alarms continue to divert valuable lifesaving SFRS resources away from other emergency incidents as well as the financial impact on a reducing budget. The impact to the premises having the false alarms should not be underestimated as the disruption of schools, hospitals and businesses has impacts on the education of children, the treatment of patients and the productivity and sustainability of the businesses. As more premises install linked alarm systems the SFRS is fighting a tide of increasing calls and will seek to engage with those responsible to ensure mutually beneficial outcomes. The measure of *false alarm-equipment*

failure provides a gauge of one area of unwanted fire alarms which with some partnership work can be realistically reduced and this is an appropriate priority moving forward.

Engagement – what our stakeholders told us

Building on the intelligence we gathered during consultation of our Strategic Plan 2019-22 we re-engaged with our key stakeholders to seek further views on our local service delivery.

The limited online survey respondents from Midlothian, barring two, were all quite satisfied or very satisfied with how the SFRS is performing locally and the same result for how the SFRS reflects local needs in our plans and activities. These two question responses demonstrate the currency of the local plan and supports the existing priorities. Other areas that were felt to be quite important or very important were developing areas around home fire safety, RTCs, flooding, terrorism, accidents in the home, support for young people and health and wellbeing. These areas can all be progressed within the existing partnership priorities in the Midlothian Community Fire and Rescue Plan. Some comments made suggestions around local resources and specific incident response types and these have been considered and are either captured locally (increases to flood response capability) or within national project work (retained duty system project). The Local Senior Officer has the responsibility to ensure the national fire and rescue service is delivered very locally in Midlothian and will endeavour to reflect and take account of local views wherever possible. This is predominantly through the local Police and Fire and Rescue Board.

Local Planning – what we learned from other local plans

Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) draw together public, voluntary and private sector bodies, and local communities to deliver a shared 'plan' to improve the lives of local people based on evidence.

The Single Midlothian Plan is the result of a detailed strategic assessment and has a very focussed number of priorities to improve outcomes for communities in Midlothian. The Local Community Fire and Rescue Plan is designed to be an extension of this plan and deliver with a focus on relevant Midlothian community safety outcomes.

As the SFRS evolves, we will play a key part in public service reform and continue to identify new opportunities to broaden our role within society to ensure as a modern Fire and Rescue Service, we provide the appropriate protection for the communities of Midlothian and this will be planned and delivered in partnership within the community planning arena.

Scrutiny – what we learned from the Inspectorate

To support this formal review the outcomes from HM Fire Service Inspectorate's (HMFSI) Local Area Inspections of SFRS service delivery within local authority areas have been considered.

In total, 12 local authority area inspections have been concluded since 2015. These include Aberdeen City, East Renfrewshire, Western Isles, West Lothian, Dundee City, South Ayrshire, Scottish Borders, Moray, Glasgow City, Highland, North Lanarkshire, and most recently Dumfries and Galloway. Once prepared and agreed, inspection reports are published by HMFSI on their [website](#).

The findings of HMFSI inspections influenced how Local Fire and Rescue Plans were developed in 2017. In response to these findings, our reports on the review of our first tranche of Plans provided risk-based evidence to identify and shape new priorities. The review reports also provided benchmark information against other authority areas. The timing of preparation and publication of new Plans was also staggered to enable alignment with the development of Local Outcome Improvement Plans.

Although a common corporate template is used to prepare Plans, Local Senior Officers have the flexibility to identify specific local priorities supported by appropriate local performance measures relevant to their area.

An area HMFSI highlights for exploration is the identification of local targets. To avoid expressing desired results which are unachievable, uncontrollable or impractical the SFRS will only apply targets when it is appropriate to do so.

HMFSI Local Area Inspection Reports will continue to be monitored to ensure the continuous improvement of Local Plans and to identify good practice.

Conclusion

In summary this review concludes that the priorities in the 2018 Midlothian Community Fire and Rescue Plan are fit for purpose with an element of future proofing for what may lie ahead. Although the priorities will still be subject to further consultation as part of a refreshed plan at the appropriate time it is recommended that they stay as they are.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the following priorities are taken forward in the new Local Community Fire and Rescue Plan for 2021 in the Midlothian area:

Local Priorities:

- 1. As part of a Community Partnership approach, we will make people safer in their homes.**
- 2. We will promote Community Resilience whilst contributing to improved outcomes for people involved in non-fire emergencies.**
- 3. Together with our Community Partners, we will contribute to**

making Midlothian roads safer.

- 4. As part of a Community Partnership, we will challenge anti-social behaviour.**
- 5. In partnership, we will aim to reduce the occurrence and impact of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals.**