

**Working together
for a safer Scotland**



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
Working together for a safer Scotland

COMMUNITY FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN

FOR SCOTTISH BORDERS

2018



DRAFT PLAN FOR CONSULTATION



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Foreword

Foreword to be added upon completion of consultation.

Introduction

Welcome to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Community Fire and Rescue Plan for the Scottish Borders. This plan has been developed to support the delivery of agreed local outcomes for the people of Scottish Borders in conjunction with the national priorities contained within the SFRS Strategic Plan 2016- 2019. Our ambition is to work in partnership to improve community safety and enhance the well-being of those living in the Scottish Borders whilst tackling issues of social inequality. This plan will set out our priorities in order to support this ambition.

This plan recognises what we have delivered in the past and looks forward to what we aim to achieve over the next three years and beyond. The safety of our communities is at the heart of everything we do, whether it is responding to emergencies or providing prevention advice and measures. The plan will highlight our resources in the Scottish Borders, the changing risks to local communities, and how we aim to deliver our services to meet the challenges we face.

As a public service and a statutory member of the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership, we recognise that to be effective and efficient, we must work closely with our partners in order to identify and provide for those most at risk. By working this way, we will look to reduce duplication, share resources and information and make improvements. We will actively contribute to the shared Vision, Themes, and Outcomes set out in the *Scottish Borders Community Plan, Our Scottish Borders, Your community plan 2017*, <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/communityplanning> and it is our intention that the Community Fire and Rescue Plan is viewed as an extension of the Scottish Borders Community Plan.

Whilst we will continue to prepare for and respond to incidents such as fires and road traffic collisions, we must also ensure we are ready to deal with the changing risks society face, including an ageing population, the effects of climate change on the environment, and terrorism. This change in how and what we respond to has already been experienced in the Scottish Borders with local crews responding to Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrests (OHCA), as a pilot project, in support of our Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) colleagues. A separate initiative in the Scottish Borders has seen our home safety visits evolve into a more holistic approach, taking into account the risk of slips, trips and falls in the home as well as identifying those at risk from fuel poverty and other vulnerabilities. As we move forward, we will look to build on these innovative approaches whilst ensuring our staff are trained, equipped and located appropriately to respond to emergencies, promote prevention, and protect communities.

As the SFRS evolves, we will continue to play a key part in public service reform and explore 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 the Scottish Borders.

David Farries
Local Senior Officer
Midlothian, East Lothian and Scottish Borders

National Context

Scottish Ministers set out their specific expectations for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in the Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2016. This provides the outline we should follow to ensure our resources and activities are aligned with the Scottish Government's Purpose and national outcomes.

Our Strategic Plan 2016-19 has been designed to meet these national expectations. Set against a complex and evolving backdrop our Strategic Plan encapsulates our mission, values and strategic priorities.

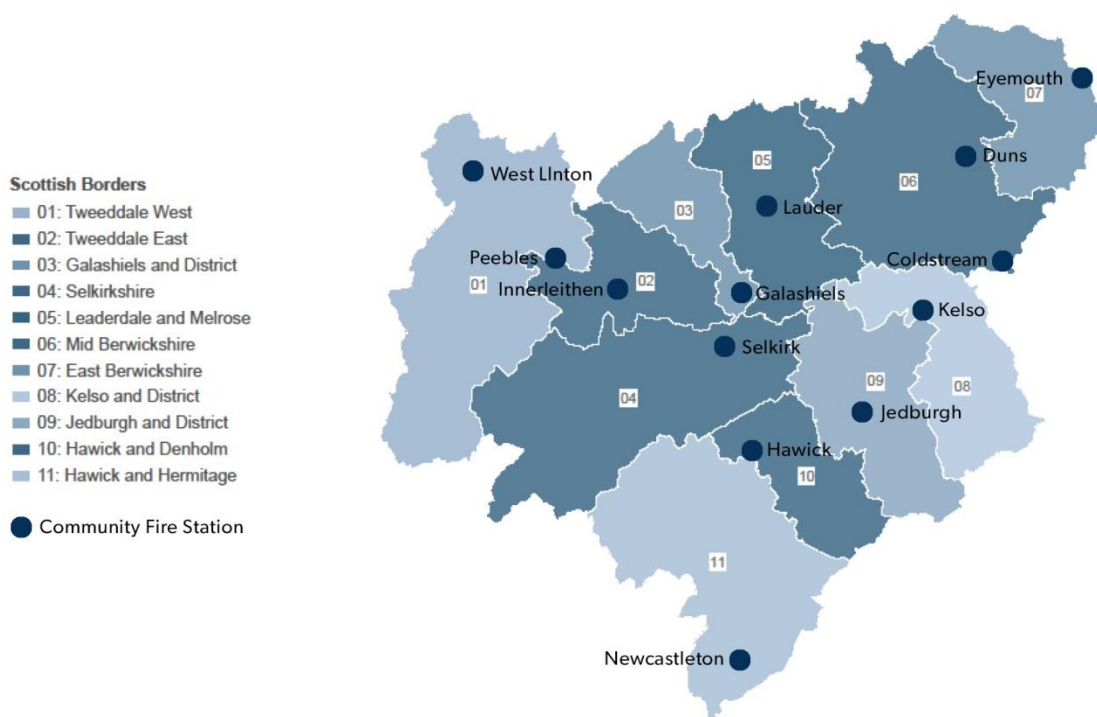


These have been shaped with due regard to the challenges we face and to what we need to achieve to be a highly effective, sustainable public service. Operating within a climate of significant financial uncertainty and public service reform means we need to transform how we operate. This will particularly include how we prepare for and respond to changing societal needs, the impact of climate change and the threat of terrorism.

Strong leadership, supported by sound governance and management arrangements are at the very core of our foundations. These arrangements will direct and provide assurance that we comply with our statutory responsibilities. In addition, they will provide Local Senior Officers with supporting mechanisms to deliver services specifically tailored to local needs.

Local Context

The Scottish Borders has a population of just over 114,000 people who reside within an area including and ranging from major towns such as Galashiels and Hawick to single dwellings in remote rural locations. The diagram below outlines the electoral ward boundaries whilst highlighting the locations of our 13 Community Fire Stations.



Over the past five years, the SFRS responded to 7538 incidents within the Scottish Borders, which is an average of 1508 incidents each year. The Key Performance Indicator table below details our operational response over the same period by incident type.

| Key performance indicator | 2012/13 | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Dwelling fires | 108 | 110 | 84 | 109 | 89 |
| All fire casualties and fatalities | 18 | 28 | 15 | 18 | 17 |
| All deliberate fires excl. dwellings | 63 | 79 | 92 | 100 | 97 |
| Special Service - RTCs | 86 | 76 | 92 | 107 | 94 |
| Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals | 919 | 878 | 905 | 800 | 878 |

Whilst reducing Dwelling Fires, Fire Casualties and Fatalities will continue to be at the heart of our prevention activities, over the last two decades, and similar to the rest of the UK, we have seen a gradual decrease in the amount of dwelling fires we attend. Dwelling Fires accounted for 7% of our operational activity last year with 2.5 people in every 10,000 in the Scottish Borders requiring the attendance of the SFRS for a fire in their home. Fire casualties have averaged 17 over the last five years, unfortunately this included one fire fatality each year.

Prevention will continue to be a core activity for SFRS staff in the Scottish Borders. Our Home Fire Safety programme, which commenced over 10 years ago has proved successful in terms of reducing dwelling fires and associated casualties whilst providing thousands of homes with early

warning smoke detection. Approximately 2000 Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) are completed every year in the Borders by operational crews or dedicated community safety staff.

Our Living safely in the Home pilot in the Cheviot locality has proved to be very successful and we will look to build on this whilst adapting how we deliver home safety visits. Our visits will become more holistic and take into account a range of risks in the home including, slips, trips and falls, fuel poverty, frailty and dementia amongst other vulnerabilities.

Deliberate fires (not including dwellings) are often, but not always, of a malicious nature. Deliberate fires accounted for approximately 10% of our operational activity over the last five years and typically involved refuse, grass, wood and scrubland. Increases in this type of incident activity are generally seasonal and often linked to anti-social behaviour. Deliberate fires of a malicious nature place an unnecessary demand on SFRS resources as well often affecting communities socially and economically.

Responding to Road Traffic Collisions (RTC's) has unfortunately become an increasing part of our operational activity over the last decade. In general terms we have seen a year on year increase in the amount of RTC's we attend in the Scottish Borders that ultimately has resulted in more road fatalities and injuries.

Reducing RTC's and its impacts has also been recognised as a concern within Borders communities and was ranked sixth out of 24 priorities through a recent Police Scotland public consultation survey, *Your View Counts*, www.scotland.police.uk This priority is further reflected in the *Scottish Borders Community Plan, Our Scottish Borders, Your community plan 2017* cross cutting outcome, "*Fewer people killed or seriously injured on our roads*", <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/communityplanning>

The term "Special Service" is used to describe non-fire related incidents and includes RTC's, Flooding, OHCA, Water Rescue and Hazardous Materials incidents amongst others. Throughout the last 15-20 years, Fire and Rescue Services across the UK have seen a significant increase in attendance at these types of incident whilst domestic property fires decrease. During 2016-17, Special Service incidents accounted for 21% of all emergency calls in the Scottish Borders.

Recent history demonstrates that severe wet weather and subsequent flooding is a major risk for particular parts of the Borders and this will remain a focus of our emergency response capability, particularly for our Water Rescue and Flood Response teams located at Galashiels and Hawick Community Fire Stations. When required we will also work in partnership with Scottish Borders Council Emergency Planning and other service providers either as an emergency response or in a preventative capacity.

Due to the location and skills sets of our community-based resources, and the remote nature of much of the Scottish Borders, we have been able to provide assistance to our partners, such as Police Scotland and the SAS, on an increasing basis and for a variety of reasons including medical co- response, effecting entry and professional advice.

The Scottish Borders has been at the forefront of change and innovation with three of our Community Fire Stations, out of an initial 10 across Scotland, selected to take part in a pilot that has seen SFRS crews responding to OHCA's in support of SAS colleagues. By assisting our SAS colleagues we aim to not only increase an individual's chances of survival but also improve their longer term recovery outcomes.

Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) have accounted for over 50% of our operational incidents in the Scottish Borders over the last five year. Similar to other operational activities, this type of incident demand is not unique to the Scottish Borders with the UK as a whole facing challenges in relation to reducing UFAS. With disruption to local businesses, schools, healthcare facilities and others, these unwanted calls can have a significant impact across the Scottish Borders area.

Following national policy and using local initiatives we will continue to prioritise the reduction of UFAS whilst engaging with key stakeholders, partners and those with responsibilities for the premises involved.

Our 13 Community Fire Stations include two wholetime stations at Galashiels and Hawick with both stations also employing Retained Duty System (RDS) units, the remaining 11 stations are staffed by RDS crews. Wholetime stations are permanently staffed 24/7 throughout the year whilst our RDS staff operate on an “on call” basis and are alerted by pager for emergency calls.

Our operational crews provide a wide range of “traditional” Fire and Rescue emergency response as well as specialisms such as Water Rescue, Flood Response, and Incident support capability from Gala and Hawick. As part of a national pilot, enhanced training was provided to our staff at Coldstream, Hawick and Lauder Community Fire Stations to allow them to provide a response to OHCA incidents.

Frontline staff are also supported by a team of local and national officers from the Training and Employee Development (TED) directorate. The local TED officers are based at Galashiels Community Fire Station and provide dedicated support to operational crews in terms of acquiring new skills, maintaining existing skills and ensuring role competency.

Prevention and Protection (P&P) officers, formerly known as Community Safety staff, are also located at Galashiels. The team consists of Fire Safety Enforcement officers who deal with legislative matters including the auditing of relevant premises. The remainder of P&P staff form the Community Action Team and carry out an engagement role through a diverse and wide reaching range of prevention activities. In addition to this, a SFRS Local Area Liaison Officer acts as a coordinator for engagement activities whilst liaising with external partners as an embedded member of the Scottish Borders Safer Communities team.

An Area Manager, or Local Senior Officer (LSO), has overall responsibility for discharging the functions of the SFRS within the Scottish Borders. Day to day management of resources is devolved to the Scottish Borders Group Manager (GM) responsible for Service Delivery. Community Fire Stations are clustered into three geographical groups, East, West and North with each group managed by a Station Manager (SM). The Senior Management team also consists of a further GM and two SM's who have responsibility for P&P and TED across the LSO area of Midlothian, East Lothian and the Scottish Borders.

Working in Partnership to achieve better outcomes for the people of the Scottish Borders

This plan and its priorities reflect a partnership approach whilst sharing the vision and themes that will lead to improved outcomes for the communities of the Scottish Borders. The examples below highlight some of the ways in which we aim to contribute to the Scottish Borders Community Plan 2017. The list is not exhaustive and we will continually look for innovative ways to help improve outcomes.

| Scottish Borders Community Plan Theme | How we plan to contribute |
|---|--|
| <i>Economy & Skills</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• By consolidation and where possible, development of existing youth engagement initiatives such as the TD1 project in Galashiels. By participating in these programmes, younger people will acquire new skills, practical and theoretical, learn to work within a team and build self-confidence. The programme will promote better citizenship whilst potentially improving opportunities for employment.• Reduce the impact of unwanted fire alarm signals on local businesses and education establishments. |
| <i>Our Health & Wellbeing</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will provide a range of prevention advice and measures through holistic home safety visits with the aim of keeping people safe in their homes.• We will explore opportunities to work closer with our Health and Social care colleagues in order to reach those most vulnerable in our communities whilst contributing to longer term health outcomes. |
| <i>Our Children & Young People</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• By continuing to make a positive contribution to the Community Justice agenda.• Our holistic home safety programme will aim to reduce Unintentional Harm in the home within the under 5-year-old age group. |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In partnership we will provide opportunities for young people in the Scottish Borders to gain valuable life skills through delivery of structured programmes. |
| <i>Our Vulnerable Adults & Families</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will continue to be an active member of the Scottish Borders Safer Communities team and carry out a range of preventative and intervention measures. This will include addressing social issues such as, reducing Domestic Abuse, identifying those at risk from Drugs and Alcohol, Fuel Poverty, Frailty and Dementia |
| <i>Our Ageing Population</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will explore ways to reduce Unintentional Harm in the Home (particularly through partnership working) whilst focussing on the risks associated with the elderly including slips, trips and falls. |

Crossing Cutting Outcomes

| | |
|---|--|
| <i>Fewer People experiencing anti-social behaviour</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In partnership with Police and other CPP members, we will prioritise the reduction of anti-social related Deliberate Fire Setting (excluding Dwellings) through a range of prevention, intervention and diversionary activities. |
| <i>Fewer people killed or seriously injured on our roads</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through active participation as a member of the Scottish Borders Road Safety Working Group By contributing to prevention initiatives such as Police Scotland's Drivewise and continuing our "make it or break it" programme that highlights the consequences of RTC's to new and potential young drivers. |

Local Priorities

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

Traditionally, the Fire and Rescue Service have focussed on reducing the risk of fire in the home through advice and providing domestic smoke detection. We will never lose sight of this crucial element of our work in the community however we recognise that we can also contribute to safety in other ways. Unintentional Harm in the home, however minor, can have far-reaching and long-term effects on individuals, families and service providers.

With people living longer, risks in the home have evolved and whilst we have reduced the number of dwelling fires and associated casualties, the amount of persons suffering a fall in their home requiring medical attention has increased. Evidence suggests that young children, particularly under 5's are at risk from unintentional harm ranging from choking to trapping fingers in doors. Other vulnerabilities include conditions or dependences such as Dementia, Frailty, Drugs and Alcohol and Fuel Poverty.

By adapting our approach to home safety and assessing risk holistically, in partnership our aim is to reduce a wide range of unintentional harm in the home extending beyond fire. This can be achieved by preventative advice, physical measures or referral to the SFRS or an appropriate partner agency.

This priority also supports the Scottish Borders Community Plan 2017 themes, *Our Children and Young People* and *Our Ageing Population*

We will achieve it by:

- *Providing a highly skilled, well trained and appropriate firefighting response.*
- *In Partnership, proactively identifying those most at risk from Unintentional Harm in the home*
- *Conducting holistic Home Safety Visits that assess a range of risks within the home including fire, slips, trips and fall and other vulnerabilities*
- *Exchanging risk information with partners including referrals*

We will monitor progress by:

- *Reviewing and reporting the number of accidental dwelling fires and associated casualties and fatalities*
- *Reviewing and reporting the number of home safety visits conducted and smoke detectors fitted/issued*
- *Reviewing and reporting the number of home safety visits that have provided advice or measures with the aim of reducing unintentional harm and injury in the home, including partnership referrals*

Expected Outcomes

- *Support the independent living of vulnerable people within the Scottish Borders*
- *Reduce the social and economic cost of Unintentional Harm in the Home including fires, slips, trips and falls*

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

“Special Service” is the Fire & Rescue Service term given to non-fire related emergencies/incidents including, Road Traffic Collisions, Rescue from Water, Flooding, Height, Confined Space, Structural Collapse, Hazardous Material incidents and Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest co-response with the Scottish Ambulance Service. Unfortunately, when incidents of this type occur they often involve casualties and sometimes fatalities.

The Scottish Borders has a diverse range of Special Service risks including busy A&B class roads that are used regularly by commuters and tourists, the Borders rail link, extensive waterways including the River Tweed and many commercial businesses such as farming and textiles.

On average, 20% of all SFRS incidents each year in the Scottish Borders are Special Service calls. As the SFRS explore opportunities for assisting our partners through emergency intervention there is a potential for associated casualty figures to continue to rise as we attend more Special Service incidents.

We will look to improve existing preventative strategies with Community Partners whilst ensuring that should we need to provide emergency response, we can do, effectively and efficiently, in order to improve outcomes for all Special Service Casualties.

This priority also supports the Scottish Borders Community Plan 2017 themes, *Our Ageing Population and fewer people killed or seriously injured on our roads.*

We will achieve it by:

- *Being an integral component of Scottish Borders Community Planning and championing an effective partnership approach to risk reduction*
- *Education and awareness aimed at high-risk groups within our communities*
- *Training our staff and locating our resources in order to provide an effective and efficient emergency response*
- *Building on our relationships with other emergency services and improving how we work together through prevention and intervention*

We will monitor progress by:

- *Reviewing and reporting on the number of Special Service Casualties including OHCA, RTC, Water/ Flood Rescue, and effecting entry*
- *Monitoring and evaluating SFRS participation in community events and initiatives designed to enhance community resilience*

Expected Outcomes:

- *Improved outcomes for persons suffering an Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest in the Scottish Borders*
- *Reduce the social and economic cost of Special Service Casualties*
- *Where capacity exists, reduce the demand on Community Partners through prevention and intervention activities*

3. Together with our Community Partners, we will contribute to making Scottish Borders roads safer.

Whilst road traffic collisions (RTC's) and associated casualty figures in Scotland have reduced over the previous twenty years, RTC's occur on an all too frequent basis in the Scottish Borders and accounted for 28% of our non-fire emergency calls last year.

As well as providing an emergency response to accidents on our roads, the SFRS have a key role to play in reducing RTC's through education and raising awareness in partnership with our Community Partners. By using experience and statistical evidence we will identify those most likely to be involved in a RTC in the Scottish Borders, with these groups being the focus of attention for prevention activities based on risk.

We will aim to build on existing local prevention initiatives and in partnership look to utilise our resources innovatively, efficiently and proactively with the ultimate aim of making the roads in the Scottish Borders safer.

This priority also supports the Scottish Borders Community Plan 2017 cross cutting theme, *fewer people killed or seriously injured on our roads*.

We will achieve it by:

- *Working with our partners within the Scottish Borders to identify those groups most at risk*
- *Delivering the appropriate prevention activities to those most at risk whilst being proactive and innovative*
- *Continued support of the Scottish Borders Safer Communities Unit and Community Planning Partnership Road Safety Working Group*
- *Encouraging young drivers and other groups to be responsible road users through active engagement and education*

We will monitor progress by:

- *Reviewing and reporting on the number and type of road traffic collisions within the Scottish Borders*
- *Reporting and evaluating the effectiveness of our partnership prevention activities*

Expected Outcomes:

- *SFRS to have contributed towards reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on roads in the Scottish Borders*
- *SFRS to have contributed to the reduction of road traffic collisions within the Scottish Borders*
- *SFRS to have contributed to reducing the consequences and associated community impacts of RTC's*

4. As part of a Community Partnership, we will challenge Anti-Social Behaviour

Anti-social behaviour can manifest itself in many ways and often has a significant detrimental effect on communities for a number of reasons.

The SFRS generally experience anti-social behaviour either through physical or verbal violence to our crews or Deliberate Fire Setting. Thankfully, the former is a rare occurrence in the Scottish Borders however the figures relating to Deliberate Fire Setting are not so positive.

There is often a close link between deliberate fires and anti-social behaviour and predominately involves malicious ignition of refuse, grass and woodland. Incidents of this type accounted for approximately 10% of our operational activity over the last five years. Due to the sporadic and random nature of many deliberately started fires, prevention activities are often reactive.

As a Service, we recognise our responsibility in reducing anti-social behaviour and its impact, this extends to not only fire related instances but includes other social issues such as Domestic Abuse.

This priority also supports the Scottish Borders Community Plan 2017 themes, *Our Vulnerable Adults and Families* and *Fewer people experiencing anti-social behaviour*.

We will achieve it by:

- *In Partnership identifying those parts of the Scottish Borders affected by deliberate fire setting whilst, when required, delivering effective prevention activities*
- *Acting as role models to promote good citizenship, especially with those who have or are likely to become involved in deliberate fire setting and potentially wider anti-social behaviour*
- *Exploring opportunities to lead and participate in innovative projects*
- *Continuing to support the Scottish Borders Safer Communities Unit and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) in relation to Domestic Abuse*

We will monitor progress by:

- *Reviewing and reporting on the number and type of deliberate fire setting incidents within the Scottish Borders.*
- *Evaluating and reporting on the effectiveness of our youth engagement/intervention programmes and monitoring our attendance at MARACs*

Expected Outcomes:

- *Promotion of active and responsible citizenship across the Scottish Borders*
- *Communities feeling safe from crime, disorder and danger*
- *Reduce the number of attendances to fires of a deliberate nature*
- *Reduce the adverse effects and negative impacts, which deliberate fire setting and other types of anti-social behaviour has on people's lives within the Scottish Borders*

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

Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) are defined as incidents where an automated fire alarm system activates and results in the mobilisation of SFRS when there is no fire. Whilst a small number of fire alarm signals generated are due to confirmed fire conditions, the vast majority are “false alarms”.

With UFAS accounting for over 50% of our incident activity it's clear that this places a significant burden on the SFRS in terms of resources, time and associated costs.

The impact of UFAS in the wider community can be significant in terms of business disruption, effects on health care premises, education establishments and any other non-domestic premises effected by this. The level of unnecessary blue light response journeys increases road risks and hazards to firefighters and to the public and also have a detrimental impact on the environment through additional carbon emissions. Active and positive engagement with occupiers to take responsibility in limiting the number of UFAS incidents within their premises is integral to reducing these impacts.

We will achieve it by:

- *Investigating the cause of each UFAS call and documenting the information gained*
- *Engaging with duty holders and those responsible for fire safety management of premises to examine causes of UFAS calls and provide advice to prevent re-occurrence*
- *Look to reduce the number of fire appliances mobilised using a risk-based approach to responding to automated fire alarms*
- *Maintaining a dedicated UFAS champion within the Scottish Borders area to oversee performance and best practice approaches to UFAS reduction*

We will monitor progress by:

- *Reviewing and reporting on the number of UFAS calls in the Scottish Borders area*
- *Reviewing and reporting on risk based reductions in the SFRS weight of response to premises with automated fire alarm systems*

Expected Outcomes:

- *Reduce the demand on the SFRS from UFAS*
- *Reduce the economic cost to commerce in the Scottish Borders from disruption from UFAS*
- *Reduce the impact on education premises and health care facilities from UFAS*
- *Reduced vehicle movements, increasing capacity for other activity, improved road safety and reduced carbon footprint.*

Review

To ensure this Community Fire and Rescue Plan remains flexible to emerging local or national priorities a review may be carried out at any time but will be reviewed at least once every three years. A review may also be carried out if the Scottish Minister directs it or if a new Strategic Plan is approved. Following a review the Local Senior Officer may revise the Plan.

Tell us what you think

This draft Community Fire and Rescue Plan sets out what our broad ambitions will be on behalf of the people of our area. It sets our local direction for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and it will determine the details contained in all our other plans for that period.

We would like you to tell us what you think of our plan. The formal consultation for this draft Community Fire and Rescue Plan opens on 25th September 2017 and will run until 18th December 2017. To ensure we review and manage all responses consistently you are invited to provide comment in our online survey. This can be accessed at firescotland.citizenspace.com. After the consultation is closed we will publish the results.

If you cannot access our online survey, or if you would like more information about the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in your area you can:

Write to: Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Galashiels Community Fire station
143 Croft Street
Galashiels
TD1 3BS

Phone: 01896 758326
Visit our website: www.firescotland.gov.uk
Follow us on Twitter
Like us on Facebook

(Contact Us)

If you would like to tell us what you think of this plan or how you think we are doing locally you can:

Write to: Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
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Galashiels
TD1 3BS

Phone: 01896 758326
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