

**Working together  
for a safer Scotland**



**SCOTTISH  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Working together for a safer Scotland

# **SCOTTISH BORDERS 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
Dwelling fires	109	91	100	104	103	●
All fire casualties (fatal & non-fatal (incl. p/c's))	18	27	18	21	31	◆
All deliberate fires excl. dwellings	101	97	150	137	128	●
Special Service - RTCs	108	99	93	87	99	◆
Special Service - Casualties	120	110	85	92	82	●
False Alarm - Equipment failure	570	629	614	654	655	▲

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 in Community Fire and Rescue Plan

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 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” project in the Cheviot area. 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 13 community fire stations in the Scottish Borders. 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 and particularly for RTCs as a Scottish Borders Community Planning priority. With the potential to return to the out of hospital cardiac arrest workstream, previously piloted in the Scottish Borders, 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 Scottish Borders roads safer.**

By providing trained and equipped firefighters to respond across the Scottish Borders to deal with road traffic collisions (RTCs) the SFRS contributes to improving outcomes for those involved. The performance measures within priority 2 above remain useful 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 and this is a key local priority for the Scottish Borders and cements this as being 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 the Scottish Borders to provide opportunities to support their development and life skills. Successes, stemming from the work with TD1 youth project in Galashiels, 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 with 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.

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

The online survey respondents from the Scottish Borders 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 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 Scottish Borders 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 the Scottish Borders and will endeavour to reflect and take account of local views wherever possible. This is predominantly through the local Police, Fire and Community Safety Scrutiny Board.

### **Local Planning – what we learned from other local plans**

As statutory partners in community planning the SFRS is well represented in different partnership forums throughout the Scottish Borders. The overarching Community Plan is where partnership work stems from and ultimately succeeds in improving outcomes.

*“Working together with our communities and through targeted partnership action, the quality of life will improve for all who live, work or study in the Scottish Borders.”*  
Our Vision, Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership

The strategic assessment within the Community Plan provides the data to focus on the areas where shared outcomes need to be improved. The plan itself dovetails with the Community Fire and Rescue Service Plan and allows the SFRS in partnership to contribute to and further develop within several areas. Work in domestic violence, care for the elderly and contributing to improved educational attainment are all areas where the SFRS has contributed to in the Scottish Borders and will continue to develop within the community planning arena.

Link to Scottish Borders Community Plan:

[https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/5148/scottish\\_borders\\_community\\_plan\\_-\\_may\\_2018](https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/5148/scottish_borders_community_plan_-_may_2018)

## **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.

The Scottish Borders HMFSI inspection was published in February 2017 and the resulting action plan was developed and subsequently agreed and progressed with the local scrutiny board approval through into 2018. The report was welcomed and demonstrated the positive partnership work in the Scottish Borders.

## **Conclusion**

In summary this review concludes that the priorities in the 2018 Scottish Borders 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 Scottish Borders 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 Scottish Borders 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.**