

REPORT TO: COMMUNITY SAFETY & PROTECTION COMMITTEE – 23 APRIL 2018

REPORT ON: CONSULTATION ON THE SAFE AND PLANNED FUTURE OF THE SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

REPORT NO: 123-2018

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Community Safety and Public Protection Committee of a consultation by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) on a number of transformation proposals, and to seek the Committee's approval of the draft response in order that it can be submitted on behalf of Dundee City Council.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The committee are asked to approve the draft response, included at Appendix 1, to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service consultation on the safe and planned future of the SFRS and authorise the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services to submit the response on behalf of Dundee City Council.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no financial implications.

4.0 BACKGROUND

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) consider that their current operating model needs to be updated and is currently consulting on a proposed four year transformation programme aimed at creating a more flexible and efficient service, designed to deal with new and emerging risks. These risks include increased frequency of severe weather incidents, international terrorism, and Scotland's aging population.

4.1 The consultation document emphasises the benefits of increasing the preventative work undertaken by SFRS and how this can reduce the demand on a range of other public services. The model proposed increases the capacity of SFRS to undertake this type of work.

4.2 The proposals include moving away from the current arrangements where the same numbers of firefighters are on duty day and night, whereas the service demand is split 80% daytime 20% nighttime. SFRS intend to slightly reduce the number of firefighters over a four year period, guaranteeing no compulsory redundancies.

4.3 A review of the fire station footprint and consideration of sharing premises with Police Scotland and Service Scottish Ambulance is also included. The range of equipment and vehicles used by the Service is discussed to take advantage of advances in firefighting technology. This may include the use of a more effective range of vehicles and appliances with for example, smaller vehicles being deployed to deal with secondary fires or automated fire alarms.

4.4 The proposals include training and equipping firefighters for a broader role, including an emergency medical response, to enhance support other public services.

4.5 A draft response to the consultation is included at Appendix 1 of this report. It is broadly supportive in principle of the approach and proposals set out by SFRS, but states that support is predicated on SFRS being able to fulfil its stated purpose of working with partners on prevention protection and response to improve the safety and well-being of the people of Scotland.

4.6 Specifically, the draft response seeks assurance from SFRS that before any changes are decided that may impact on the Service in Dundee, there will be a full consultation with partners and stakeholders, including Dundee City Council and the communities of Dundee, on any proposals that will directly impact upon the four community fire stations that currently serve Dundee.

4.7 The consultation can be viewed on the SFRS website.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. There are no major issues.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

6.1 The Council Management Team have been consulted and are in agreement with the content of this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None

Elaine Zwirlein
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

Tom Stirling
Head of Community Safety & Protection

30th March 2018

CONSULTATION ON THE SAFE AND PLANNED FUTURE OF THE SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

DRAFT RESPONSE ON BEHALF OF DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

This is an online consultation. The questions are reproduced below together with draft responses:

Are you responding on behalf of : An organisation Your organisation: Dundee City Council

Do you agree with the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service overall vision for transformation?

Yes

Please say in the box below what you think the main benefits for Scotland will be:

From the case set out in the information accompanying the consultation the main benefits will be the creation of an updated, efficient and flexible model for delivering SFRS services.

Please provide your response to the following statements by ticking the relevant box:

Statement

I trust the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to change its operating model – including station footprint – in ways that are safe for Scotland

We assume that, in carrying out this Transformation programme, SFRS will adhere to its purpose of working with partners on prevention protection and response to improve the safety and well-being of the people of Scotland

Firefighters should be trained and equipped to meet the new and emerging risks Scotland faces

Agree

Of course, if it is accepted that firefighters are to take on a different role with a wider remit that has been the case, then they need to receive appropriate training and be provided with the equipment necessary to carry out the duties required of them.

Firefighters should be rewarded for taking on an expanded role, and in accordance with the risks they take

Agree

Clearly, if the role Firefighters are asked to fulfil is changing and expanding, then they should be appropriately rewarded. Like all other areas of the public sector, SFRS will require to manage financial resources to ensure it is living within its means.

Latest technology should be used where possible to improve firefighter and public safety.

Agree

Firefighters could be trained to take on roles that would reduce the burden on other public services.

Agree

We understand that a pilot scheme has been running where Firefighters were equipped to administer assistance in the case of cardiac arrests. Should Firefighters routinely be tasked with delivering an emergency medical response, it is assumed this will be done in agreement with and coordinated with the Scottish Ambulance Service.

A more flexible approach to crewing during the late evening and early morning hours would allow firefighters to do more during the day when demand is higher.

Agree.

Please say why you agreed or disagreed, in the box below:

Whilst we agree with this statement in principle, we would need to understand how SFRS would deal with a major incident requiring a large number of resources in, for example, the early hours of the morning. We note the statistic provided in the consultation document that only 20% of calls to the service occur between 11pm and 7am, however, if a major incident occurs during these hours, SFRS must be able to provide a fully resourced response.

What single thing is most important to you about the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service?

Being able to provide an appropriate emergency response at all times to keep our communities safe. In other words, to be there when people need the SFRS.

Do you think there is anything the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service should NOT do as part of transformation? Please give a reason for your answer in the box below.

SFRS should not diversify to the extent that there is any loss of focus or diminution in the ability to provide the core services that the organisation is tasked with delivering.

Do you have any final comment to make on the transformation of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service?

We note that the Transformation programme set out in the consultation includes the rationalisation of SFRS estate. We would like to be assured that before any changes are decided upon in Dundee there will be a full consultation with partners and stakeholders, including Dundee City Council and the communities of Dundee, on changes that will directly impact upon the four community fire stations that currently serve Dundee. We note that in the very recent past, SFRS have invested in Dundee by creating the new National Control Room at Macalpine Road and the Asset Resource Centre at Claverhouse and assume that these important national resources will be maintained.

The Transformation document makes the case for change needed to take SFRS forward and sets out a direction for travel, there is, understandably at this stage, little detail on what this means in a local context. Although our responses to the questions put in the consultation are broadly supportive, this

should not be interpreted as meaning we by default agree with detailed changes proposed for Dundee. We expect to be consulted on changes to be introduced that change the way SFRS delivers its services in Dundee.

