

ITEM No ...2.....

REPORT TO: COMMUNITY SAFETY & PROTECTION COMMITTEE –14 MAY 2018

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

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

REPORT NO: 173-2018

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Community Safety and Public Protection Committee with an update on the Council's proposed response to a consultation by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) on a number of transformation proposals, and to seek the Committee's approval to submit the response on behalf of Dundee City Council.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The committee are asked to approve the revised draft response to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service consultation on the safe and planned future of the SFRS and to remit 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

4.1 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.

4.2 Reference is made to the meeting of the Community Safety and Public Protection Committee of 23 April 2018, where members agreed to defer taking a decision on the Council's response to the SFRS to a further meeting of the Committee, to take place on 14 May 2018.

4.3 In the intervening period members asked that SFRS provide an opportunity for members to be briefed in more detail on the proposals discussed in the consultation. Subsequently, SFRS provided briefings to elected members on 3 May.

4.4 Following the briefings, the Convener met with the leaders of the opposition groups to discuss a revised consultation response to the SFRS consultation.

4.5 Elected Members are asked to approve the revised response which is included at appendix 1.

4.6 The consultation can be viewed on the SFRS website.
<http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/transformation/public-consultation.aspx>

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

11 May 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?

No Opinion

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. This supposes that there are sufficient resources available to deliver the transformation. In our view, there is the need for more detail and more dialogue with staff, their trade unions and the general public before we could say that we agree with the vision for the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service.

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. Dundee City Council would strongly oppose any reduction in the number of community fire stations that serve the city and is of the view that all four stations provide a vital service to the communities they serve.

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. This question is self-evident, therefore we would need to understand the reasons behind including this in the consultation.

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. In addition, it our view that any new arrangements for remuneration should be arrived at through full consultation and negotiation with SFRS staff.

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

Agree

Again, this question is self- evident, therefore we would need to understand the reasons behind including this in the consultation.

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, Any additional role for firefighters should be in addition to, not instead of, current emergency provision. This should be about improving public safety and protection not about saving money.

The City Council would oppose any degradation of the current levels of professionalism available and therefore there should be no increase of the ratio of retained as opposed to full time at the one fire station in the city that currently employs retained staff (Balmossie Fire Station - the other three stations in the city are wholly full time). Nor do we support the introduction of retained crews elsewhere at the expense of the full time compliment.

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 stakeholder, including Dundee City Council and the communities of Dundee, on and 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, these 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.

There is a need for much more detail and for Dundee City Council as a consultee to have a much clearer idea that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is taking its staff with it on this journey. Dundee City Council supports the retention of services in Dundee at this time and makes clear that we do not support any rationalisation of services within Dundee.

