

REPORT TO: DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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**POLICE AND FIRE REFORM:- LOCAL SCRUTINY AND ENGAGEMENT–DEVELOPMENT  
OF LOCAL FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN**

**Abstract**

This Report provides Members with an update on Fire Reform and the development of a Local Fire and Rescue Plan to be approved by Dundee City Council as required within the recently enacted Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.

**1 RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 It is recommended that Members:-

- Note the overview of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012
- Note the work which is currently on-going to develop a suitable Fire and Rescue Plan for Dundee City Council's area
- Provide comment on the suitability of the sample plan and its contribution to community safety
- Consider suitable arrangements for public performance reporting

**2 BACKGROUND - POLICE AND FIRE REFORM (SCOTLAND) ACT 2012**

2.1 The Police and Fire Reform Act (Scotland) 2012 provides the legislative framework that will support the work of the new single Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and includes local scrutiny and engagement arrangements for the delivery of local fire and rescue services that will protect and improve local services and strengthen the connection between services and communities. This is premised on three key provisions within the Act:

- **The designation of a Local Senior Officer** with significant delegated authority and devolved resources for each local authority area;
- **The production of a Local Fire and Rescue Plan** for each local authority area, prepared by the Local Senior Officer, and agreed by the local authority (or authorities);
- **The creation of a strong formal relationship between councils and the services**, through local committees or other arrangements deemed appropriate locally, through which many more elected members will play a direct and formal role in shaping local priorities and scrutinising performance.

2.2 In addition to establishing a single service, the Act makes provision for the appointment of the Board, Chief Officer and describes the national accountability framework including local arrangements for scrutiny and engagement by the respective Local Authority.

2.3 At the time of compiling this report it is proposed that the new Service will be delivered via a sub-national structure of three delivery hubs – West (Strathclyde, Dumfries & Galloway, Central), East (Lothian & Borders, Fife) and Northern (Tayside, Grampian, Highlands). The structure incorporating Local Senior Officers has not yet been determined, however, it is expected that there will be between 14 and 20. The decision regarding this will be made, by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Board, in consultation with the Local Authorities, with an announcement likely before the committee meeting.

2.4 To meet the reform objectives of improved engagement and accountability, Tayside Fire and Rescue have implemented a revised service delivery structure in support of each of the three local authority areas. This change will facilitate the development of relationships and ensure a smooth transition into the new service.

2.5 The new Fire and Rescue Service for Scotland supported by Local Fire and Rescue Plans will become effective from 1 April 2013.

### 3 DEVELOPING THE FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN

3.1 The Act establishes the requirement for the Local Senior Officer, in consultation with the Local Authority, to develop a Local Fire and Rescue Plan. The purpose of the Plan is to meet the requirements of the Act by reflecting local priorities and objectives that contribute to the delivery of successful outcomes, which have been identified through local community planning. The Local Fire and Rescue Plan must:

- Set out the main priorities and objectives for fire and rescue in the local area
- Explain the reasons for selecting those priorities and objectives
- Set out proposed delivery arrangements and how they will achieve the priorities and objectives
- Identify outcomes against which the achievement of those priorities and objectives may be measured
- Detail how the priorities, objectives and arrangements will contribute to the delivery of relevant local outcomes

3.2 The Scottish National Performance Framework underpins the delivery of the Scottish Government's agenda, supports the outcomes-based approach to performance and establishes the Scottish Government's Purpose. The purpose is underpinned by five strategic objectives to make Scotland: **Wealthier and Fairer, Smarter, Healthier, Safer and Stronger, and Greener.**

3.3 Sixteen National Outcomes support these five strategic objectives and the new Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has a responsibility to contribute towards all of the national outcomes, although four in particular provide us with our strategic direction:

- **National outcome 9 –**  
*We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger.*
- **National outcome 6 –**  
*We live longer, healthier lives.*
- **National outcome 11 –**  
*We have strong, resilient communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.*

## **NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED**

- **National outcome 16 –**  
*Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.*

3.4 In preparing the Local Fire and Rescue plan the Local Senior Officer must have regard to the Fire and Rescue Framework and the SFRS three year strategic plan. The local plan will be based on a three year cycle with review taking place after six months to ensure that it reflects developments at both national and local level.

3.5 Local Fire and Rescue plans will use a standard template and include detailed actions and performance evaluation measures which will support joint Fire and Rescue and community safety partnership outcomes. A regional/local performance framework will facilitate the measuring of performance results to enable scrutiny and allow best practice to be identified and shared; this will support self assessment and continuous improvement.

3.6 A simulation of what the local plan may look like is attached at appendix A for reference purposes.

## **4 CONSULTATION ON THE PLAN**

4.1 Within the present Service Planning framework Tayside Fire and Rescue (TFR) consults widely on annual service improvement. Following a meeting with the Board on the 29 October agreement was reached that the existing arrangements for consulting on service improvements (Towards a Safer Tayside document) would be suspended.

4.2 The annual consultation on service improvement will be replaced by the development and subsequent review of the Local Fire and Rescue plan. To facilitate this, Board members considered it important to ensure that the necessary support was provided to their respective councils to ensure that the intended outcomes of greater local engagement and local accountability were met, as required by the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.

4.3 Commitment was given by elected members to use the expertise that they have gained in relation to their work with the Board, supported by TFR managers and council officials to support the development of the Local Fire and Rescue plan including suitable arrangements for governance, scrutiny and consultation.

4.4 Recent discussions have taken place with council officials to consider suitable Consultation arrangements, which will support the outcomes of openness and transparency, local engagement and equality and diversity. It is suggested that the following elements will be key to the strategy.

- Engagement with elected members and community planning partners
- Engagement with local community and focus groups
- Engagement with staff representative bodies
- Engagement with the business community including Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Business, the councils Economic Development department etc.
- Use of online surveys and social media
- Consultation with a range of stakeholders on the draft plan including elected members, local communities, local planning partnerships etc.

## **5 MANAGING PERFORMANCE**

5.1 Recent reports by Audit Scotland have highlighted the significance of a robust performance management framework to ensure that the necessary outcomes are achieved and the principles of Best Value are met. A key aspect of the planning process is the identification of suitable measures through which the delivery of the agreed objectives and outcomes can be measured and their success evaluated.

5.2 Tayside Fire and Rescue have adopted the suite of indicators that have been developed in conjunction with the Chief Fire Officers Association for Scotland. These indicators measure key aspects of risk management and include:

- Reduce the number of fires and other emergency incidents
- Reduce the loss of life in fires and other emergency incidents
- Reduce the number and severity of injuries arising in fires and other emergency incidents
- Reduce the commercial, economic and social impact of fires and other emergency incidents
- Safeguard our environment and heritage
- Provide communities with value for money

5.3 There is scope to consider additional measures in order to review the effective and efficient use of resources and members of the Policy and Resources Committee may wish to consider this further during the development of the local plan.

5.4 Targets will be set for each local area based on the previous three years of performance information to establish the baseline. These will support Scottish Performs, Scottish Fire and Rescue objectives and the local Single Outcome Agreement.

5.5 In addition to measuring local performance there is an opportunity to benchmark local services provided by the Scottish Fire and Rescue with other areas from across Scotland to enable comparisons to be made.

5.6 Local systems are presently being developed to enable relevant and accurate performance information to be provided to committee members. This information will be provided quarterly and report performance for the area as a whole area and also individual wards.

5.7 It is proposed that a written report detailing the high level fire and rescue issues on-going within the local area, highlighting the progress against key performance measures and local outcomes will be tabled in future to this committee. Additionally the local district manager Group Manager Martin Tait, will provide a verbal report on notable outcomes from local activities or actions proposed to address areas where performance is "off target".

## **6 PUBLIC PERFORMANCE REPORTING**

6.1 Tayside Fire and Rescue Board have reported annually on the performance of Tayside Fire and Rescue against the Towards a Safer Tayside action plan that incorporates service improvement actions and performance against key indicators and targets.

6.2 The annual Public Performance Report ensures compliance with the statutory requirement under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003 in relation to the duty to secure Best Value, engage with Community Planning contributing to community outcomes, secure continuous improvement and publish performance results.

6.3 Opportunities exist to further develop this process to better meet the outcomes of improved accountability and engagement. The service is currently investigating opportunities regarding the use of social media to engage with specific demographics and would welcome further suggestions from elected members on how to ensure effective engagement with all members of our communities.

6.4 Elected members are also requested to consider suitable arrangements for undertaking Public Performance Reporting under the new arrangements for 2014 and beyond.

## **7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are limited financial implications associated with the engagement and consultation process to develop local area plans, which will be contained within current Tayside Fire and Rescue revenue provisions.

## **8 CONCLUSIONS**

8.1 As a consequence of Police and Fire reform Tayside Fire and Rescue will cease to exist on the 31 March 2013. Accountability for the new Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) will pass to the SFRS Board and Scottish Government Ministers.

8.2 The Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 makes provision for the development of a Local Fire and Rescue plan, placing a requirement on the Local Senior Officer to engage with each local authority in the development of the plan.

8.3 The local authority must establish suitable governance arrangements to oversee the development of the plan and to hold the local senior officer accountable for the performance of the local service provision against the objectives and outcomes stated within the plan.

8.4 This report provides members with an update on the development of the Local Fire and Rescue plan for Dundee City Council and suggests areas where members may wish to provide direction and comment further.

## **9 Background Papers**

9.1 No background papers, as defined in Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

Fire and Rescue Headquarters  
DUNDEE