

REPORT TO: DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PUBLIC  
PROTECTION COMMITTEE

REPORT NUMBER – 311-2020

16 November 2020

Report by Area Commander Gordon Pryde, Local Senior Officer,  
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

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SUBJECT: LOCAL FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN FOR DUNDEE 2020

**Abstract**

The Report contains background information in support of Member's approving the final draft Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Dundee 2020.

**1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to present, for approval, the final draft Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Dundee 2020, which is attached at **appendix one**.

**2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that members:

- (i) Approve the final draft Local Fire and Rescue Service Plan for Dundee 2020,

**3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None.

**4 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) 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.
- 4.2 Our first Local Fire and Rescue Plans were published in April 2014 and 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.
- 4.3 The publication of our new Strategic Plan 2019-22 in October 2019 instigated a requirement to carry out a mandatory review of all Local Fire and Rescue Plans.
- 4.4 The development of a new Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Dundee provided 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. Furthermore, it helped to identify areas for improving the safety and overall wellbeing of the communities of Dundee against a backdrop of increased demand for public services, changing risk profile and more recently the impact of Covid. The outcome of the review formed the basis of a draft plan for consultation.

- 4.5 Public consultation on Local Plan Review ran from 16 January until 18 March 2020. Written and emailed responses to the consultation were received from a variety of organisations and individuals. These were, overall very supportive of the review and comments noted were fully considered as part of the production of the new Local Plan. Due to the current pandemic there has been no opportunity for physical engagement around the new Dundee Local Plan.

## **5 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was prepared to provide supporting information for all SFRS Local Plans. The evidence within the impact assessment was considered and applied as appropriate to the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Dundee.

## **6 ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

- 6.1 There are no environmental issues arising as a consequence of this report.

## **7 SUMMARY**

- 7.1 The attached final draft Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Dundee sets out proposed priorities for improving community safety, whilst helping to address inequalities and enhancing the overall wellbeing of the communities of Dundee. The SFRS's contribution towards supporting the City Plan for Dundee sits within the context of the draft plan.

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2020



# LOCAL FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN

DUNDEE



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## Introduction

It is my pleasure to introduce the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's (SFRS) Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Dundee City 2020-23. This sets out our priorities for improving community safety, whilst helping to address inequalities and enhancing the overall wellbeing of the communities of Dundee City.

In developing this plan, we have been mindful of the range of activities the SFRS might have to undertake in Dundee City on any given day. These might include fitting a smoke alarm in the home of a vulnerable person, visiting a school to educate young people on the dangers of fire, rescuing someone involved in a road traffic collision or dealing with flooding similar to what we have experienced in recent years.

The role of the SFRS is changing to meet some significant future challenges such as social change, climate change and terrorism. The plan therefore outlines how we aim to meet the challenges ahead while delivering on making Dundee City safer through improved outcomes. This includes how we will go about broadening our safety role in the community. To do this, we will build on our proven track record in prevention work and focus our attention on reducing the wider safety risks associated with unintentional harm. This is mainly driven by social changes such as an ageing population, so protecting these types of vulnerable people from harm in the home, such as slips, trips and falls is a priority for us in this plan.

Early in 2020 we faced an unprecedented challenge in the form of a global pandemic. In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, we dramatically changed how we worked so that we could continue to deliver an emergency service whilst keeping our staff and the public safe.

The pandemic is expected to have a lasting effect on society and this will change the way in which we deliver services in the long-term. The full implications are not yet known and this makes it difficult to make any far-reaching plans with certainty. As such we will keep the priorities of this Plan under regular review to ensure it remains relevant and appropriate.

The SFRS does not operate in isolation and this plan supports the crucial role of Community Planning in helping to deliver the vision, priorities and outcomes of the Dundee Community Planning Partnership (CPP) through the City Plan for Dundee 2017 - 2026.

All community partners must work closely together to ensure we tackle inequalities and improve the wide range of outcomes for our communities of Dundee City. Building on our successes through partnership working, we believe that we can make the communities of Dundee City safer and more secure, and therefore contribute towards Dundee's' vision.

The plan will be subject to regular review. This will allow us to be reactive to local needs and the changing circumstances of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

Gordon Pryde

**Local Senior Officer**





## 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 2019-22](#) has been designed to meet these national expectations. Set against a complex and evolving backdrop our Strategic Plan encapsulates our mission, values and our strategic outcomes and objectives.



To ensure we can prevent the worst from happening and to be fully prepared to respond should we called, we need to be aware of any new changing risks which threaten the safety of communities or the workforce. When developing our most recent plan, cognisance was given to: our changing population and the forecasted rise in over 75s; doing what we can to balance social and economic inequality; climate change and the devastating impact the inclement weather can have on peoples' lives and livelihoods; and the threat of terrorism.

Our Strategic Plan is supported by a three-year Strategic Plan Programme which provides details on all the activities we intend to carry out to successfully achieve our ambitions. The Programme informs our Annual Operating Plan, which provides specific detail on the actions we carry out each year, and from which our performance is scrutinised.

This Plan is a statutory Local Fire and Rescue Plan. It sets local direction to meet the strategic outcomes and objectives outlined above. It also demonstrates how we will contribute to Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs).

## Local Context

### About Dundee

Dundee is Scotland's fourth largest city, covering an area of 24 square miles, with a population of around 149,000. The city is located on the north side of the River Tay and supports national air, rail and road links. Split into the eight wards of Coldsides, East End, Lochee, Maryfield, North East, Strathmartine, The Ferry, and West End. The largest employers are: NHS Tayside, Dundee City Council, University of Dundee, Tayside Contracts, Tesco, D. C. Thomson & Co and



British Telecom. With the decline of traditional workforces, the city has attracted software developers, biomedical and technological industries and now accounts for 10% of the digital entertainment industry in the U.K. Dundee continues to be innovative in its regeneration as demonstrated by the major redevelopment of areas including the Waterfront with the city now hosting cruise liners.

A challenge for Dundee is that the size of the population is projected to remain relatively static over the next 20 years. However, the make-up of the population will see considerable change. The number of people aged over 65 is set to rise significantly as a percentage of the total population, whilst the number of people aged under 18 is reducing.

Dundee encompasses prosperous and successful areas along with those encountering deprivation linked to unemployment, low incomes, access to housing and services and poorer health outcomes.

### About the SFRS in Dundee

The SFRS has four community fire stations strategically located in Dundee. These stations provide prevention, protection and response services tailored to local needs and comprise of three Wholetime stations and one Wholetime/Retained station. These stations contribute to national resilience by providing an emergency response to fires and other emergencies including road traffic collisions, major flooding, structural collapse and hazardous material incidents.

Our Wholetime stations are crewed by 5 teams of full-time firefighters who provide a 24/7 operational response to emergencies. Each team participates in 20 hours of training and community engagement activity during each working week. In contrast, our Retained station is crewed by part-time firefighters who primarily work in other occupations. They attend a weekly training event and respond by pager to emergency incidents.

Although operational teams are the most visible of SFRS resources, they are supported by a management team and a number of back office personnel. Our valued prevention agenda is delivered by District Enforcement Officers and our Community Action Team who work alongside Community Planning Partners to develop plans and coordinate activity to improve the safety and wellbeing of our community.

One of three national Control Rooms is located at MacAlpine Road which primarily serves the north of the country. The Asset Resource Centre at Claverhouse Industrial Estate supplies vehicles, equipment and uniforms throughout the north of Scotland.

**About Community Planning in Dundee**

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires planning partners to come together in Dundee to form a Community Planning Partnership (CPP), and focus on improving local outcomes in the Dundee area.

The City Plan for Dundee 2017-2026 sets out the outcomes which contribute to a longstanding vision for the city, framed around jobs, social inclusion and quality of life. The Dundee Partnership will facilitate this improvement through locality plans with our efforts being focused upon the geographical areas of Dundee that experience the poorest outcomes.

As a statutory partner of the Dundee Partnership, we will fully contribute towards improving the local outcomes described in the City Plan for Dundee 2017-2026 and help take forward the priorities contained within our Locality Plans. Our work towards supporting this, sits within the context of the Dundee Local Fire and Rescue Plan 2017. Along with other partner plans and strategies, the shared approach for improving local outcomes in Dundee is illustrated below.



## Performance Scrutiny

### About Local Scrutiny of our Performance in Dundee

As part of the process of scrutinising local fire and rescue service delivery, we are required to submit quarterly performance reports to the Dundee Community Safety and Public Protection Committee. The purpose of these reports is to present information on the performance of the SFRS against the priorities contained within the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Dundee.

We have completed a review of our performance during 2020, which included an opportunity for stakeholders to contribute via an online survey. The outcomes of the review along with an assessment of the challenges we face and the opportunities for change have been incorporated into the set of priorities detailed in this plan.



## Local Priorities

### 1. Improving Fire Safety in the Home

Amongst the range of emergencies we attend in Dundee, fires in the home account for approximately 6% of operational demand. This, however, is the category of fire in which individuals are most likely to die or be injured, and for that reason, improving fire safety in the home continues to be a priority for us.

There are over 70,000 homes in Dundee and on average, we attend 155 house fires each year. High severity house fires in Dundee continue to be low, representing around 5% of all incidents, however the rate of fire fatalities and casualties in Dundee is the second highest when compared to all other areas of Scotland. 87% of all fire fatalities and casualties within Dundee arose because of Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADF). The generally low impact of fire in the home reflects the focus on prevention and protection work that has taken place in the city. Over the past three years 8,813 Home Fire Safety Visits have been conducted, with 1,900 smoke detectors installed to provide an essential early warning of fire. Approximately 79% of homes affected by fire had smoke or heat detection present, which raised the alarm on 70% of occasions.

Evidence indicates the most vulnerable individuals in our communities, and those living in certain geographical areas of Dundee, are at higher risk from fire in the home. The elderly account for 25% of all accidental dwelling fires and it has been identified that people who live in social isolation are potentially more vulnerable to fire. People are more likely to be affected by fire if they have used alcohol or drugs. This is deemed to be a contributory factor at 20% of all house fires, with these incidents accounting for 50% of the fire casualties recorded in Dundee.

Individuals who are at higher risk from fire are often known to other agencies such as health, social care or criminal justice. This highlights the absolute need to share knowledge, data and information between services about those most vulnerable in our communities to reduce fire risk in these households.

A home fire safety visit, where firefighters visit people in their homes to provide safety advice and fit smoke alarms, will continue to be our main tool to improve fire safety in the home. A smoke alarm cannot prevent a fire but it can alert the occupant that a fire may have started. The best way of reducing the potential for fires to occur is to influence and change the behaviour of residents and we will continue to concentrate our efforts on how to improve their fire safety awareness.

#### **Working with our partners and communities in Dundee we will:**

- Share relevant information and analyse data, to identify individuals, households, communities and geographical areas most at risk from fire.
- Target our home safety visits, and fire safety education and advice at those who are identified as being most at risk from fire.
- Make it easier for our partners to refer vulnerable individuals who are at risk from fire.
- Educate children and young people on the risks from fire, making Dundee a safer place for the future.

**Progress will be monitored by:**

- Reviewing the number of fires in the home and their severity.
- Identifying the number and severity of fire fatalities and injuries.
- Analysing the number of high risk referrals we receive from partners.

**The local outcomes we aim to improve are:**

- Our people will be better educated and skilled within a city renowned for learning and culture.
- Our children will be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.
- People in Dundee will be able to live independently and access support when they need it.
- Our communities will be safe and feel safe.



## **2. Improving Fire Safety and Resilience in the Business Community**

Non-domestic fires tend to involve businesses and have the potential to have a significant impact on our critical infrastructure and economy. It is essential that we ensure businesses are better protected and more resilient to fire to ensure their continual contribution to the economy of Dundee during these challenging economic times.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has a statutory duty under Part 3 of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 to provide advice and enforce fire safety regulations where necessary. In Dundee, approximately 3,500 non-domestic premises are covered by the Act, which requires the duty holders to meet certain responsibilities in relation to maintaining safe business environments.

Our approach of educating and advising duty holders on how to build and maintain safe business environments, combined with enforcing our powers to ensure compliance, is working effectively. In Dundee, we have the sixth highest rate of non-domestic fires in Scotland.

SFRS operate a risk based fire safety programme that is intelligence led and focusses our resources on auditing premises with high life risk and/or where there is a greater likelihood of fire. The programme of fire safety audits will also include buildings important to our heritage and critical to our local infrastructure.

### **Working with our partners and communities in Dundee we will:**

- Prioritise our Fire Safety Audits and Operational Reassurance Visits towards protecting non-domestic premises with the highest life risk and those where there is the greatest risk of fire.
- Support every business that has been affected by a fire, by undertaking a post fire audit of the premises and assisting their recovery in the quickest and most efficient way.
- Respond promptly to complaints over fire safety compliance in non-domestic premises.
- Advise on the suitability of fire safety provision in all new non-domestic premises under construction and existing premises undergoing major refurbishment.
- Engage with duty holders on how to meet fire safety compliance, to ease the burden on the business community.

### **Progress will be monitored by:**

- Reviewing the number of fires in non-domestic premises and the type of premises involved in fire.
- Analysing the number and types of fire safety audits, and Operational Re-Assurance Visits carried out across Dundee.
- Identifying the outcome of fire safety audits carried out in non-domestic premises.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of our responses to complaints over fire safety compliance in non-domestic premises.

**The local outcomes we aim to improve are:**

- Dundee will be an internationally recognised city at the heart of a vibrant region with more and better employment opportunities for people.
- Our communities will be safe and feel safe.
- Our people will live in strong, popular and attractive communities.

### **3. Minimising the Impact of Unintentional Harm**

The Building Safer Communities Phase 2: National Assessment of Unintentional Harm defines these types of incidents as: “unintentional physical and psychological harm that could have been predicted and prevented”. Unintentional harm contributes greatly to the number of injuries and deaths recorded in our communities. Annually, there are 1250-1400 deaths from unintentional harm in Scotland.

The impact of unintentional harm is also a significant economic burden for public services, with the costs to the NHS in Scotland from physical unintentional harm alone, amounting to at least £200 million per year.

Unintentional harm in the home (falls in particular) has been identified as one of the most prominent issues and the associated risk profile closely matches those people that are most at risk from fire, the elderly. It makes sense that our work goes beyond making people safer from fire. We will position unintentional harm as a local priority, and work with our partners to make the most vulnerable people in Dundee safer from experiencing unintentional harm in the home, much of which is driven by social and economic inequality. We will also ensure that we raise awareness of the signs of domestic abuse, exploitation and substance abuse within the SFRS as we may be the first service that affected people have contact with. We will do our utmost to signpost vulnerable people to partner agencies who can offer the most effective support mechanisms.

Out with the home environment, we experience the impact of unintentional harm through our response to a range of non-fire related emergencies. Within Dundee it is Road Traffic Collisions (RTC) which are the most significant cause of non-fire related deaths and injuries. Working with our community planning partners, we will ensure there is a co-ordinated and collaborative approach to road safety prevention activity in Dundee.

#### **Working with our partners and communities in Dundee we will:**

- Re-focus our Home Safety Visit Programme to include the assessment of unintentional harm in the home and wider health issues.
- Train our firefighters to recognise and respond to the risk factors associated with unintentional harm in the home.
- Share key data and jointly deliver targeted interventions, to reduce the incidence and impact of unintentional harm among vulnerable people in the home.
- Agree referral pathways, in light of expanding our Home Safety Visit Programme to include unintentional harm in the home.
- Target road safety activities from early years to young drivers and other ‘at risk groups’.

#### **Progress will be monitored by:**

- Analysing the number of unintentional harm referrals we make to our partners.
- Monitoring the number of attendances at RTC’s and the frequency and severity of injuries arising from RTC’s.
- Reviewing the number of other non-fire related emergencies and the frequency and severity of injuries arising from these incidents.

**The local outcomes we aim to improve are:**

- Our people will be better educated and skilled within a city renowned for learning and culture.
- Our children will be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.
- People in Dundee will be able to live independently and access support when they need it.
- Our communities will be safe and feel safe.

#### 4. Reducing Unwanted Fire Signals

On average, around 34% of all SFRS attendances in Dundee are false alarms, with those caused by Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA) being the most frequent. This is a significant drain on our resources. Travelling to these incidents under blue-light conditions presents an undue risk to our firefighters and other road users due to an increased likelihood of vehicle accidents occurring. These avoidable journeys also have a negative impact on our carbon footprint and adversely affect our local environment.

Whilst we encourage the use of AFA systems to save lives and protect buildings, more can be done to reduce the significant burden to us and businesses that Unwanted Fire Alarm Systems (UFAS) cause. A marked reduction in UFAS could release significant SFRS resources for more productive work that will deliver greater public value in Dundee, including the broader range of prevention work associated with tackling unintentional harm.

Evidence indicates that properties such as schools/universities, student accommodation, hospitals/medical care and temporary accommodation providers are major contributors to the number of UFAS in Dundee. Our approach to driving down the number of UFAS we attend in Dundee will focus on encouraging ownership of the issue by property owners/occupiers. By reducing UFAS we will lessen the burden placed on our economy due to lost production time, financial costs and the general disruption to services that these incidents cause.

During the past five years SFRS has received on average over 110 malicious false alarm calls per year. A downward trend was reported during 2018-19, but this did occur the following year with a rise. Our community engagement team continues to work with schools to emphasise the disruption that these calls cause along with the consequences of delaying a response to genuine calls for assistance.

##### Working with our partners and communities in Dundee we will:

- Investigate the cause of every UFAS event and engage with the premises owner/occupier, to agree measures for preventing reoccurrence.
- Identify the premises that have persistent call outs due to UFAS, and work with the owner/occupiers to develop, implement and monitor UFAS demand reduction plans.
- Enforce formal action on the owner/occupiers of premises that are generating unacceptable levels of UFAS, and are failing to take ownership of the issue.
- Continue to work with schools to ensure that young people aware of the consequences of making malicious false alarm calls.

##### Progress will be monitored by:

- Reviewing the number of UFAS and the type of premises generating them across Dundee.
- Evaluating the outcomes of occupier's demand reduction plans to review progress and identify and share good practice.
- Monitoring attendances at UFAS to ensure our attendances are based on an assessment of risk and demand.

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**The local outcomes we aim to improve are:**

- Dundee will be an internationally recognised city at the heart of a vibrant region with more and better employment opportunities for people.
- Our people will be better educated and skilled within a city renowned for learning and culture.
- Our children will be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.
- Our communities will be safe and feel safe.

## 5. Reducing Deliberate Fires

Protecting the communities of Dundee is not just about preventing accidental fires, we also work hard to tackle the problem of deliberate fire-setting.

During 2019/20, there were 444 deliberate fires in Dundee, with the five-year average for these incidents being 632. This level of activity accounts for 18% of all incidents in Dundee and is the fourth highest when compared to other Local Authority areas in Scotland. Antisocial behaviour is challenged by SFRS and the Dundee Community Safety Partnership as deliberate fire setting contributes to avoidable financial costs, blights our environment whilst making people feel unsafe in our communities.

In Dundee, secondary fires (e.g. rubbish/bins and grass etc.) make up around 50% of the deliberate fires we attend. The remainder involve occupied buildings, vehicles and outdoor structures such as sheds (Primary Fires). The ignition of refuse accounts for 30% of all deliberate building fires, mainly within tenement buildings. Evidence indicates that youths are the largest group of perpetrators of deliberate secondary fires, which occur more within the deprived areas of Dundee.

Collaborative working is key to tackling deliberate fires. We will use the Dundee Community Planning Partnership as a platform for engaging with a range of partners, including those in the community justice sector. Combining resources will contribute to the reduction of deliberate fires whilst helping to improve local outcomes.

We will provide advice, guidance and support to make people and properties more resilient to fires being set deliberately. Seasonal campaigns are planned to target the peak periods of school holidays and bonfire night. We recognise that education is the foundation to improve outcomes along with a strong focus on youth engagement. The Fire Related Antisocial Behaviour working group will continue to engage with young people to explain the consequences of deliberate fire setting.

### Working with our partners and communities in Dundee we will:

- Share relevant information and analyse data, to identify hot spot areas most at risk from deliberate fire-setting.
- Target education, advice and other preventative measures at the hot spot areas identified as being most at risk from deliberate fire-setting.
- Deliver effective engagement programmes and interventions to prevent children and young people becoming involved in deliberate fire-setting.
- Engage with offenders and ex-offenders involved in deliberate fire setting to educate them of the risks, and to positively influence their behaviour.
- Take positive action to reduce opportunities for deliberate fire-setting at insecure, vacant or derelict buildings.

### Progress will be monitored by:

- Reviewing the number, type and locations of deliberate fire-setting incidents within Dundee.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of our engagement programmes for reducing deliberate fire setting.

**The local outcomes we aim to improve are:**

- Dundee will be an internationally recognised city at the heart of a vibrant region with more and better employment opportunities for people.
- Our children will be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.
- Our communities will be safe and feel safe.
- Our people will live in strong, popular and attractive communities.



## Review

To ensure this Local 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.

## Contact Us

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