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## Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

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### Police & Fire and Rescue Committee – 17<sup>th</sup> August 2021

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**Subject** Performance Report and Service updates

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**Purpose** To advise members of the Police and Fire Committee as to progress against North Ayrshire's Local Fire and Rescue Plan and to provide committee members with other key Fire and Rescue Service updates

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**Recommendation** For members to note the information contained within this report

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#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 On the 1st October 2019, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) laid before the Scottish Parliament its new Strategic Plan for the period 2019-22. As a result of this publication, the Service is legally obliged to review its existing Local Fire and Rescue Plans for all 32 local authorities across Scotland.
- 1.2 The priorities contained within the current North Ayrshire Local Fire and Rescue Plan were formally approved at the full Council. The continuation of these priorities has been agreed for the 2021/22 period by the Police and Fire and Rescue Committee and will be subject to ongoing monitoring via this forum.

#### 2. Performance Summary

- 2.1 An analysis of operational responses within North Ayrshire for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021 identified a 17% increase in activity levels across the local authority when compared to the corresponding period in 2020. A further review of the three years average indicated a 3% increase in overall operational activity during a similar timeframe.
- 2.2 In reviewing operational activity on a broader level, false alarms accounted for 45% of all demand within North Ayrshire, with fire related and special service activity accounting for 43% and 12% respectively.
- 2.3 For the period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30 June 2021, overall progress is being monitored across six indicators, utilising the three-year rolling average as a basis of measuring performance. Year on year and the rolling three-year average figures are also used to review short and long term changes in demand and trends.
- 2.4 Utilising the defined approach in Section 2.3, review of performance against these six indicators identified five indicators are below and one is above the three-year average.

Two indicators have seen a reduction in the three-year average by more than 91% and 34%.

- 2.5 Further analysis of this performance is provided within the associated performance report (Appendix A).

### **3. SFRS Updates**

- 3.1 The SFRS is currently consulting on how it will respond to automatic fire alarms moving forward. This consultation process is open for a period of 12 weeks and will close on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

A presentation on this matter will be given to the Police and Fire and Rescue Committee at its meeting on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> August and supporting information was provided for the Police and Fire and Rescue Committee's consideration.

- 3.2 The SFRS is participating in an array of Ayrshire Community Wealth Building initiatives; including the Procurement, Land and Assets and Fair Employment work streams. The organisation has recently awarded a significant contract to an Ayrshire employer to build a number of medium sized rescue appliances; which will have a wider impact on the Pan Ayrshire economy.

- 3.3 The SFRS is continuing to implement measures to reduce its carbon footprint in line with its Climate Change Response Plan 2045 aspirations. Recent activities have seen photovoltaic solar panels being installed at Kilwinning Community Fire Station. It has been agreed to fit these systems to another three Community Fire Stations in Ayrshire, with one of those being Dreghorn Community Fire Station.

- 3.4 Chief Officer Martin Blunden recently submitted his annual '*Chief Officer Report*' to the Board of the SFRS. A copy of this report is attached (Appendix B) for the Committee's consideration.

### **4. Proposal**

It is proposed that members of the Police & Fire and Rescue Committee:

- a) Note the contents of the performance summary and associated report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30 June 2021.
- b) Note the SFRS updates.

### **5. Implications**

- 5.1 No implications have been identified at this time in respect of service delivery within North Ayrshire.

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 Fire and rescue service activity is subject to regular monitoring and review via the priorities identified within the Local Fire and Rescue Plan.
- 6.2 Members of the Police and Fire and Rescue Committee will be kept up to date on progress against the Local Fire and Rescue Plan, and to any future fire and rescue service updates as they arise.

**Area Commander Ian McMeekin**  
**Local Senior Officer**  
**East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire and South Ayrshire**  
**Scottish Fire and Rescue Service**

*For further information please contact Area Commander Ian McMeekin 01294 606811*



**North Ayrshire Performance Report  
1st April 2021 - 30th June 2021**



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# North Ayrshire Performance Report

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# Local Fire and Rescue Service Plan Priorities

The Local Fire and Rescue Service Plan has been developed to set out the priorities and objectives within North Ayrshire and allows our local authority partners to scrutinise the performance outcomes of these priorities. We will continue to work closely with our partners in North Ayrshire to ensure we are all “**Working Together for a Safer Scotland**” through targeting risks to our communities at a local level.

The plan has been developed to complement key partnership activity embedded across North Ayrshire's Community Planning Partnership. Through effective and co-ordinated partnership working we will seek to deliver continuous improvement in our performance and effective service delivery in our area of operations.

The Local Fire and Rescue Plan for North Ayrshire identified six areas for demand reduction and is subject to regular monitoring and reporting through the Police & Fire and Rescue Committee. A summary of the priorities and current activity is detailed below with further detail and analysis contained within this performance report.

	Accidental Dwelling Fires	Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties	Unintentional Injury and Harm	Deliberate Fire Setting	Non-Domestic Fire Safety	Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals
Ardrossan & Arran	5	0	2	24	0	7
Dalry & West Kilbride	2	0	0	23	3	5
Irvine East	1	0	0	10	1	0
Irvine South	5	0	1	29	1	28
Irvine West	5	0	3	49	1	27
Kilbirnie & Beith	3	0	3	23	0	11
Kilwinning	7	0	2	33	2	13
North Coast & Cumbraes	3	0	3	6	0	17
Saltcoats	4	0	0	15	0	6
Stevenson	2	0	2	52	1	12
<b>Total Incidents</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>126</b>

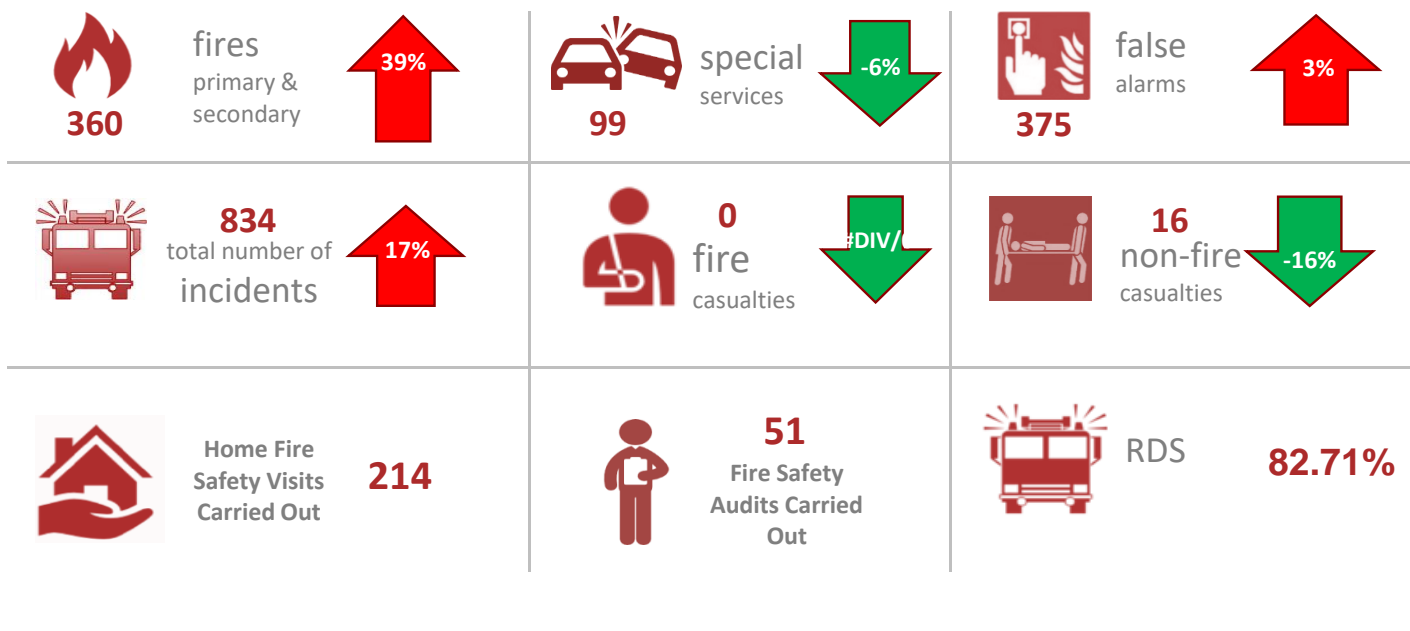
<b>Year on Year Change</b>	23%	#DIV/0!	-16%	62%	50%	6%
<b>3 Year Average Change</b>	-7%	-91%	-34%	13%	-11%	-6%
<b>5 Year Average Change</b>	-3%	-13%	-7%	1%	-4%	-3%

### About the statistics within this report

The activity totals and other statistics quoted within this report are published in the interests of transparency and openness. They are provisional in nature and subject to change as a result of ongoing quality assurance and review. Because all statistics quoted are provisional there may be a difference in the period totals quoted in our reports after local publication which result from revisions or additions to the data in our systems. The Scottish Government publishes official statistics each year which allow for comparisons to be made over longer periods of time.

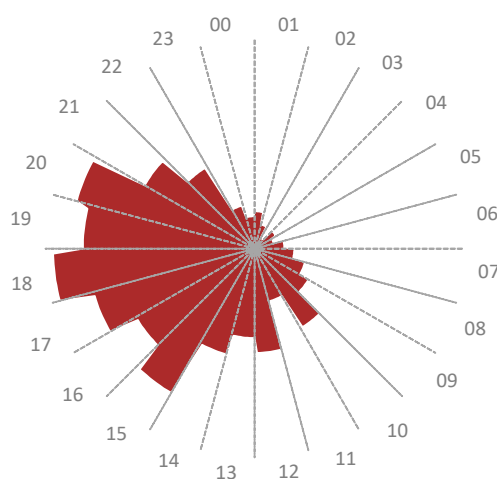
- Activity levels have reduced by more than 5%
- Activity levels have reduced by up to 5%
- Activity levels have increased overall

# North Ayrshire Delivery Activity Summary

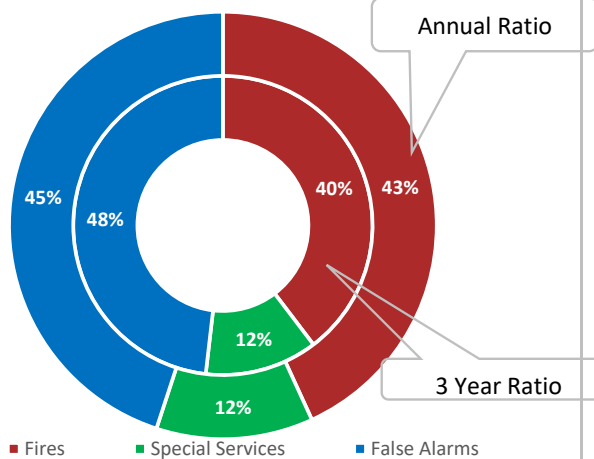


## Activity by Time of Day

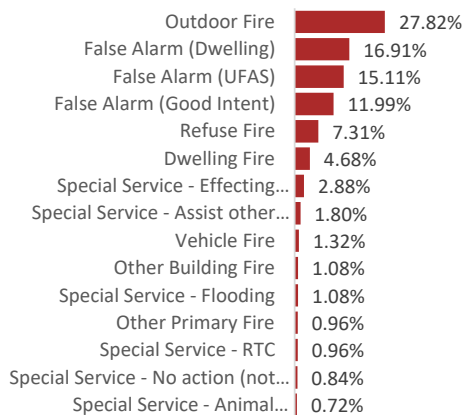
Hour (am)	Total	Hour (pm)	Total
Midnight	13	Mid-day	42
1am	15	1pm	36
2am	10	2pm	44
3am	5	3pm	67
4am	10	4pm	55
5am	8	5pm	67
6am	12	6pm	81
7am	16	7pm	69
8am	21	8pm	74
9am	25	9pm	51
10am	37	10pm	38
11am	22	11pm	18



## Incidents by Classification



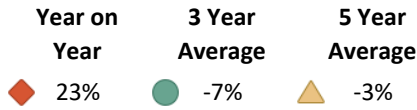
## Top 15 Incident Types by % of Total Incidents



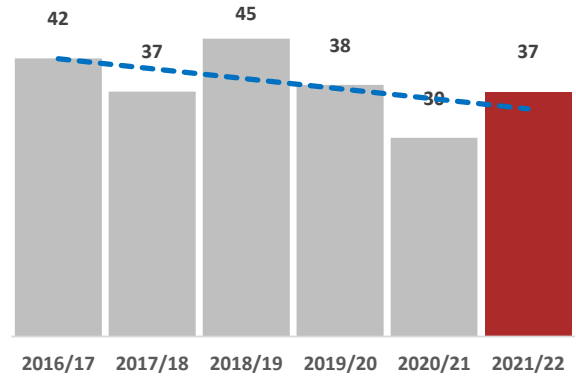
# Domestic Safety - Accidental Dwelling Fires



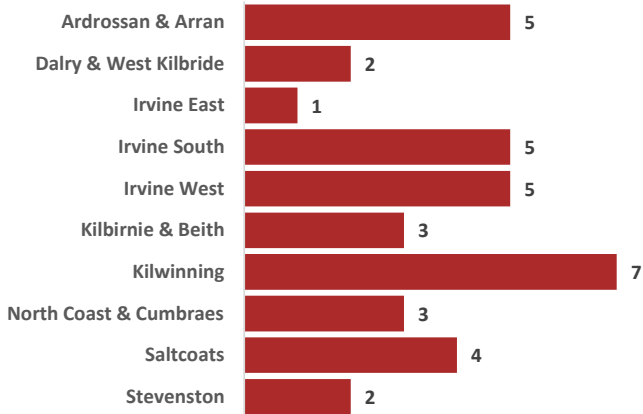
## Performance Summary



## Accidental Dwelling Fires to Date



## Accidental Dwelling Fires by Ward Area



## Severity of Accidental Dwelling Fires



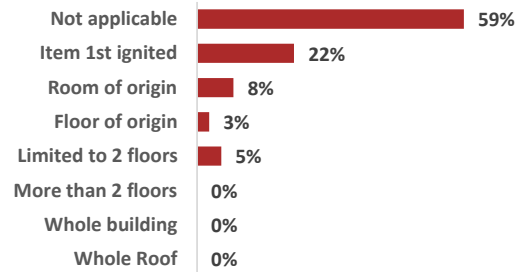
No Firefighting Action

Direct Firefighting

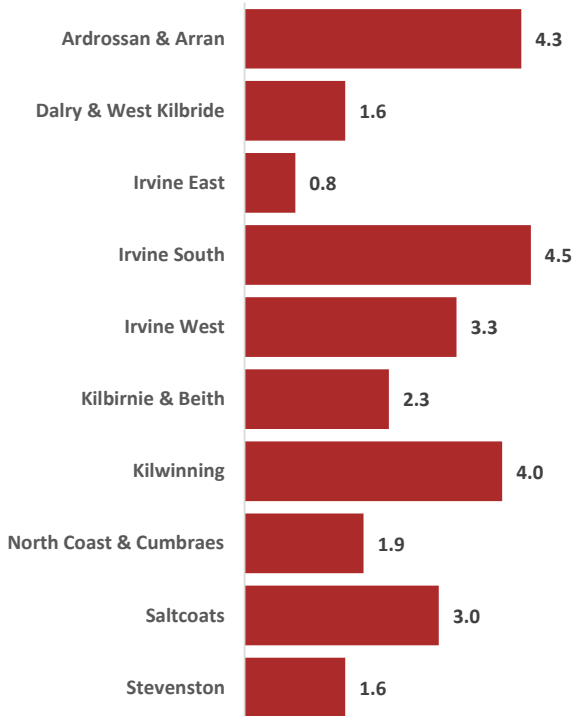
**24%**

**35%**

## Extent of Fire Damage



## Incidents Per 10,000 Population - North Ayrshire



## Automatic Detection & Actuation



Detection Present

Detection Actuated

**78%**

**83%**



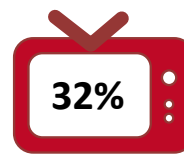
Calls Made via Linked Alarms

**16%**

## Incidents Per 10,000 Population - Ayrshire



## Human Factors



Distraction



Alcohol/Drug Impairment

**32%**

**11%**





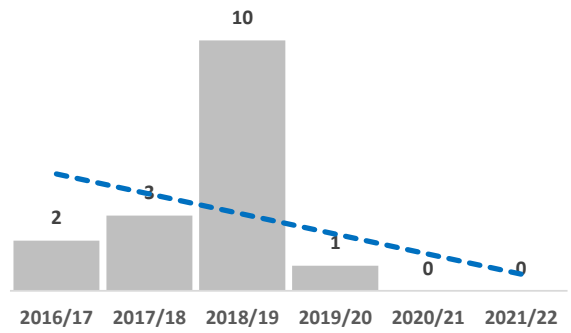
# Domestic Safety - Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties



## Performance Summary

Year on Year #DIV/0!  
 3 Year Average -91%  
 5 Year Average -13%

## Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties Year to Date



## Fire Casualties by Ward Area

Ardrossan & Arran	0
Dalry & West Kilbride	0
Irvine East	0
Irvine South	0
Irvine West	0
Kilbirnie & Beith	0
Kilwinning	0
North Coast & Cumbraes	0
Saltcoats	0
Stevenston	0

## Age / Gender Profile



0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0 - 9	10 - 19	20 - 49	50 - 79	80+					

## Casualties Per 10,000 Population - North Ayrshire

Ardrossan & Arran	0.00
Dalry & West Kilbride	0.00
Irvine East	0.00
Irvine South	0.00
Irvine West	0.00
Kilbirnie & Beith	0.00
Kilwinning	0.00
North Coast & Cumbraes	0.00
Saltcoats	0.00
Stevenston	0.00

## Extent of Harm



First Aid at Scene



Hospital Slight Injuries

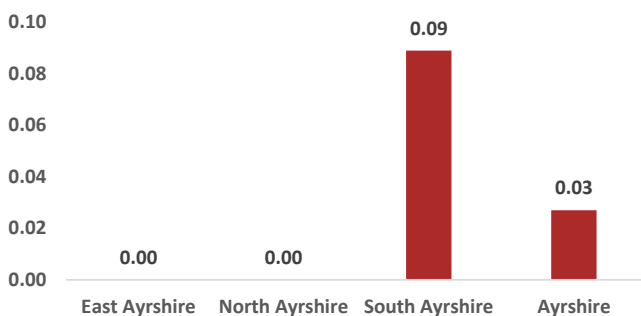


Hospital Serious



Fatal Injuries **0**

## Casualties Per 10,000 Population - Ayrshire



Breathing difficulties    Asphyxiation    Burns – slight    Other medical condition

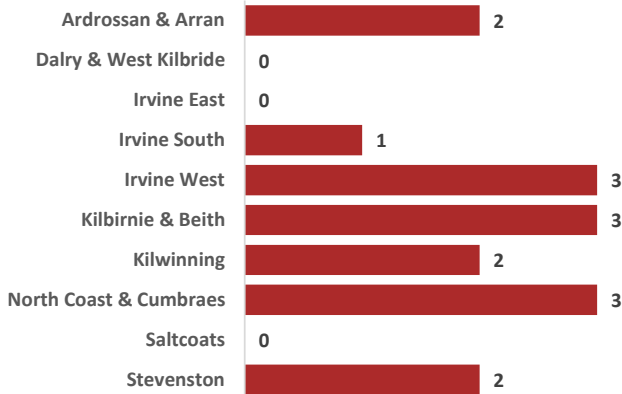
# Unintentional Injury or Harm



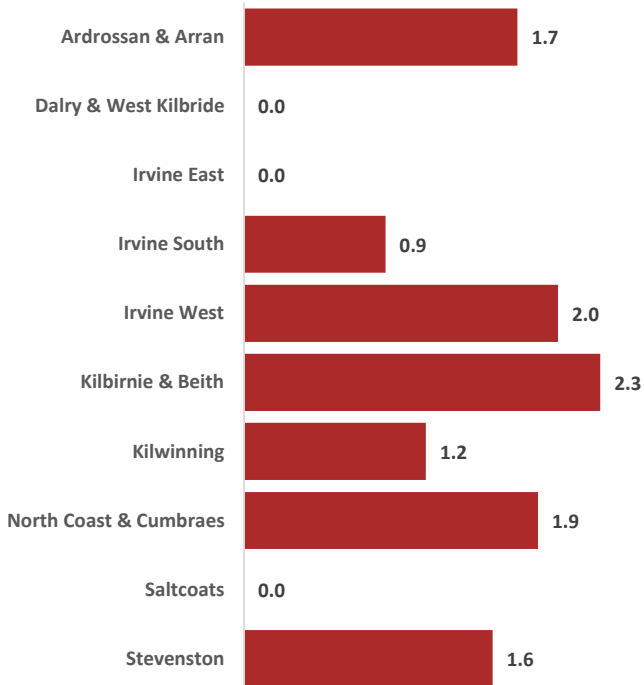
## Performance Summary



## Non-Fire Casualties by Ward Area



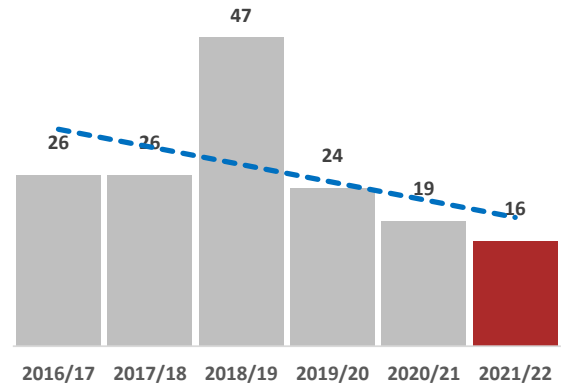
## Casualties Per 10,000 Population - North Ayrshire



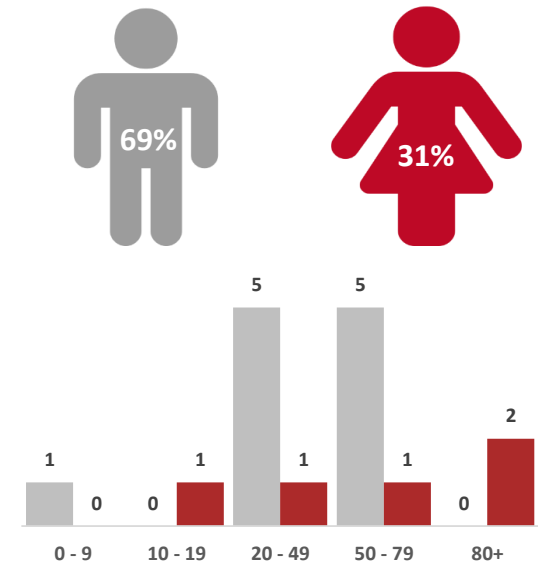
## Non-Casualties Per 10,000 Population - Ayrshire



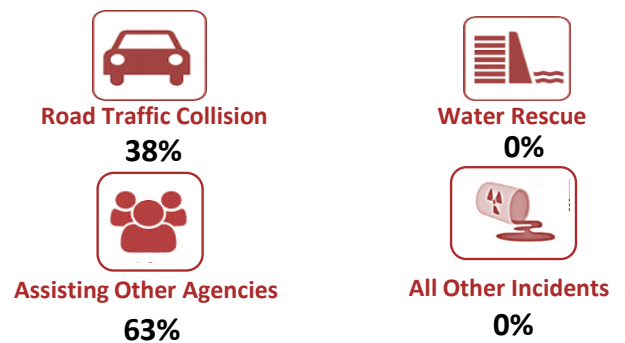
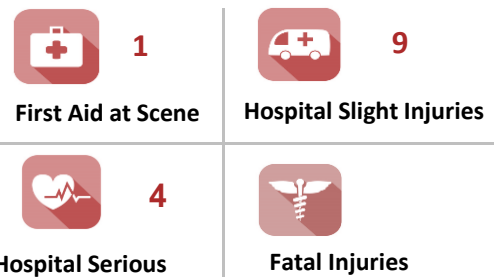
## Special Service Casualties Year to Date



## Age / Gender Profile



## Extent of Harm



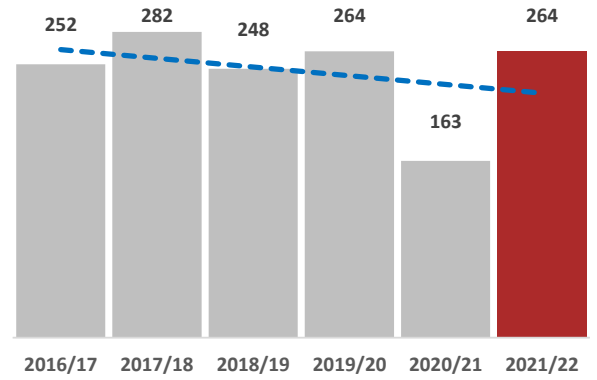
# Deliberate Fire Setting



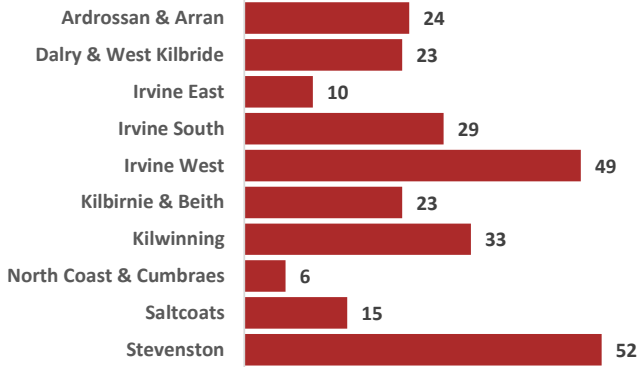
## Performance Summary

Year on Year **62%**    3 Year Average **2%**    5 Year Average **1%**

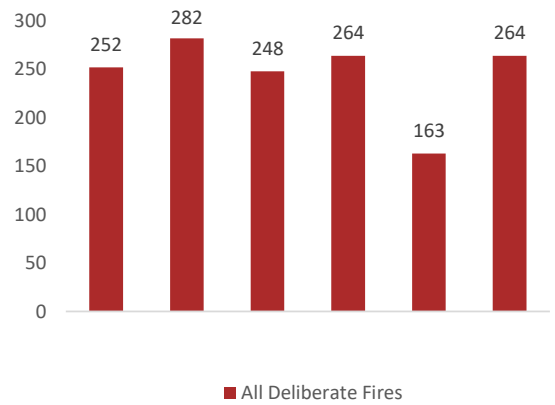
## Deliberate Fires Year to Date



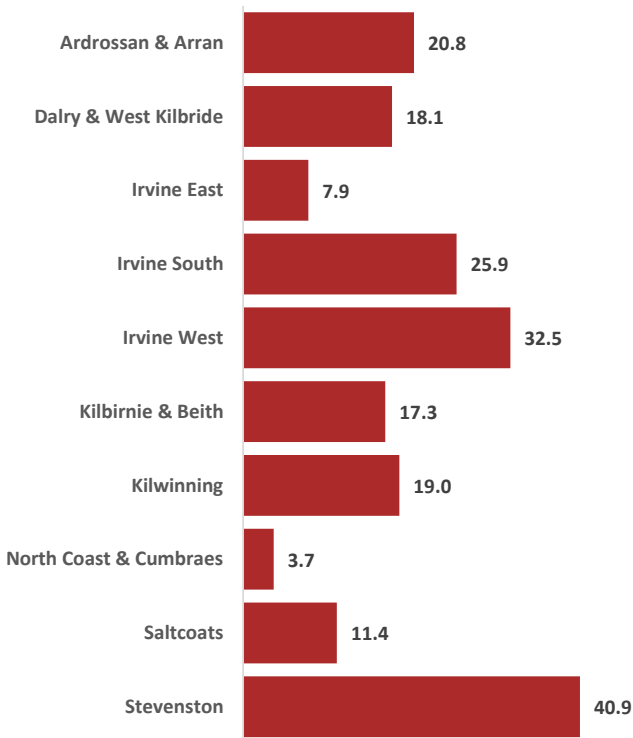
## Deliberate Fires by Ward Area



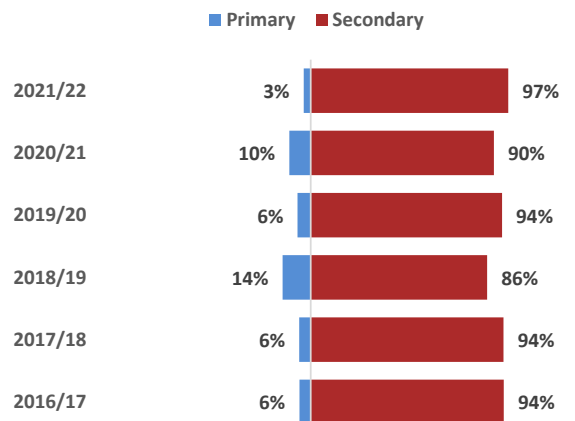
## Deliberate Fires Compared to Operational Activity



## Incidents Per 10,000 Population - North Ayrshire



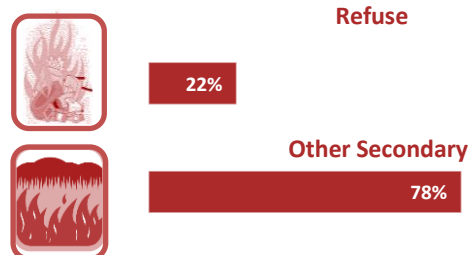
## Deliberate Fires by Classification



## Incidents Per 10,000 Population - Ayrshire



## Secondary Fire Ratio by Activity Type



# Non-Domestic Fire Safety



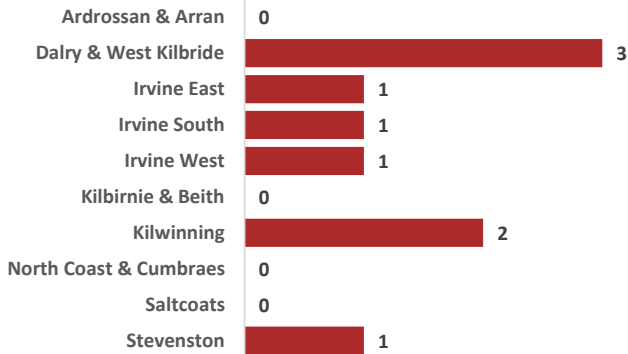
## Performance Summary

Year on Year **50%** ● -11% ▲ -4%

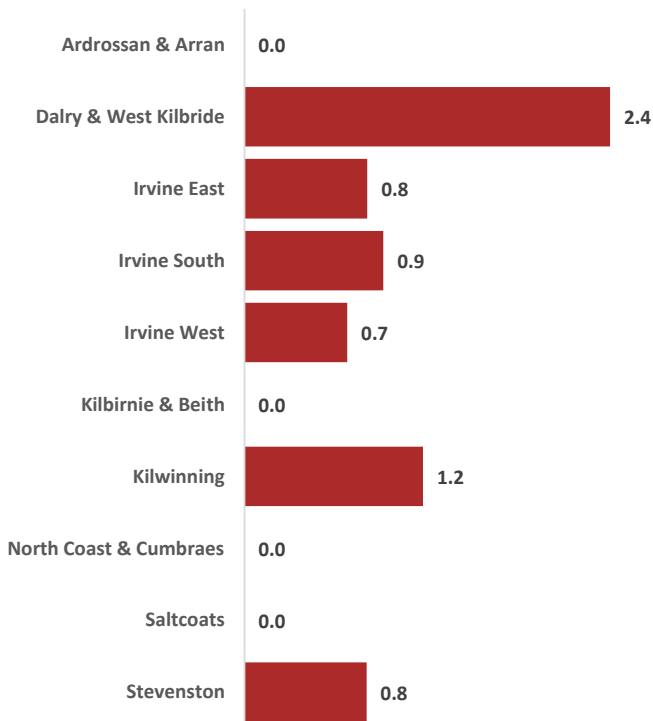
3 Year Average **50%**

5 Year Average **50%**

## Non-Domestic Fires by Ward Area



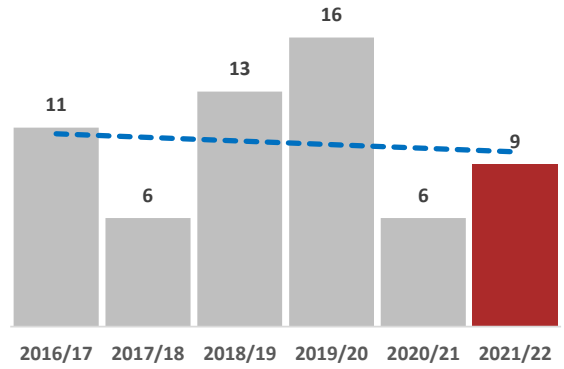
## Incidents Per 10,000 Population - North Ayrshire



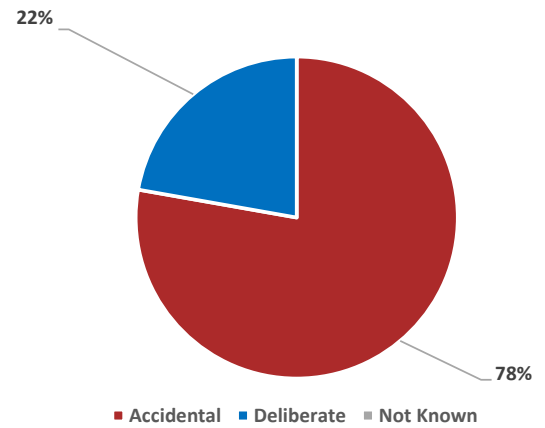
## Incidents Per 10,000 Population - Ayrshire



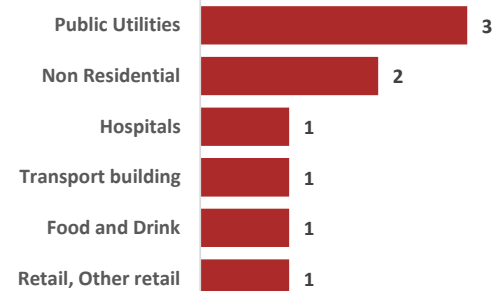
## Non-Domestic Fires Year to Date



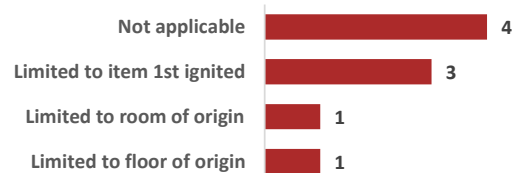
## Non-Domestic Fires by Nature of Origin



## Non-Domestic Fires by Premises Type



## Extent of Fire Damage



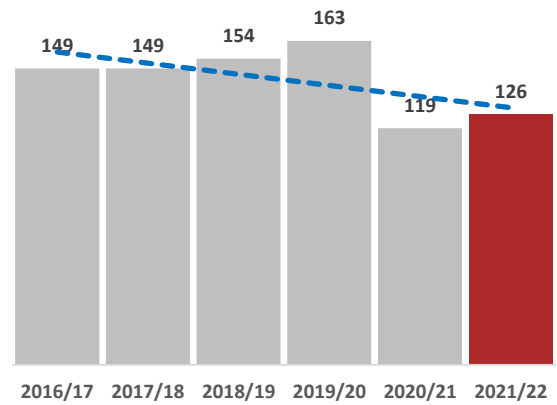
# Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals



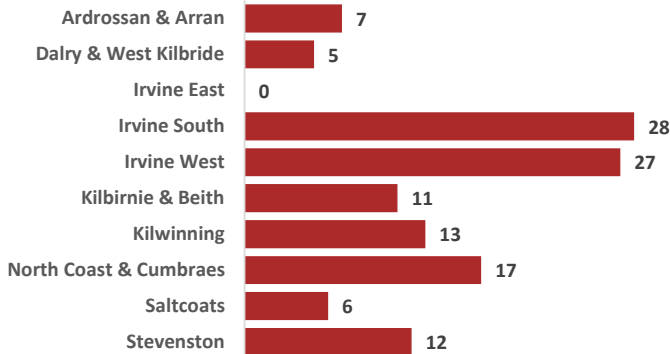
## Performance Summary

Year on Year **6%**   
 3 Year Average **-6%**   
 5 Year Average **-3%**

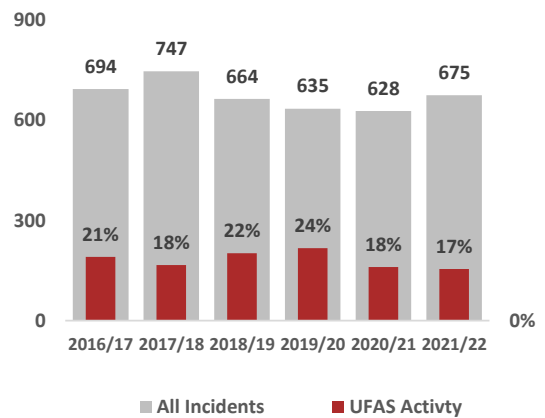
## Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals Year to Date



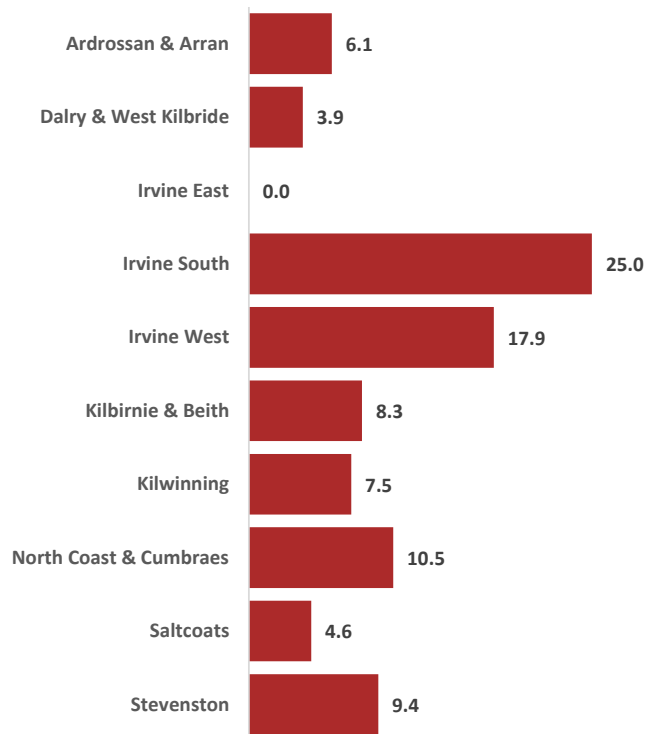
## Unwanted Fire Alarms Signals by Ward Area



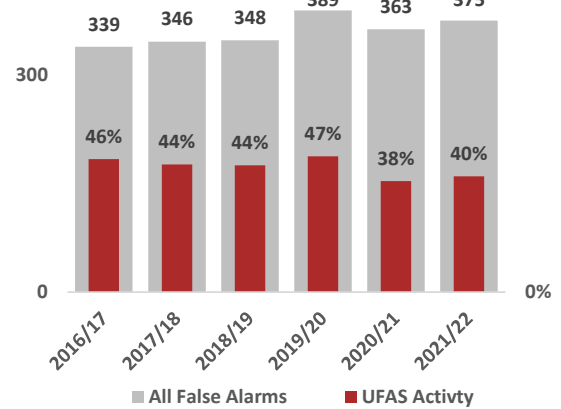
## UFAS Percentage Against all Incidents



## Incidents Per 10,000 Population - North Ayrshire



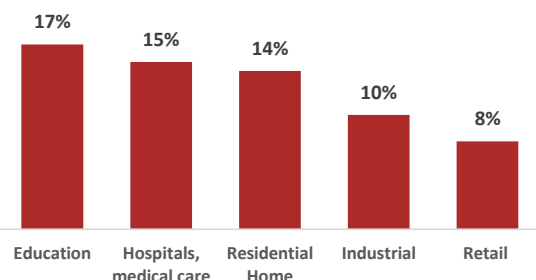
## UFAS Percentage Against all False Alarms



## Incidents Per 10,000 Population - Ayrshire



## Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals - Top 5 Premises



# Home Fire Safety Visits



**214**  
Home Fire Safety Visits Carried Out

**86**  
Smoke Detectors Fitted During Home Fire Safety Visits

Percentage of High Risk Home Fire Safety Visits Carried Out  
**48%**

Percentage of Visits Carried Out Following Attendance at an Incident  
**29%**

# Fire Safety Audits



Fire Safety Audits Carried Out  
**51**



New Audits  
**76%**



Re-Audits  
**0%**



Post Fire Audits  
**14%**



Complaint Audits  
**2%**



Broadly Compliant **31%**



Areas of Improvement **61%**



Notice of Deficiencies **8%**



Enforcement Notice **0%**



Prohibition Notice **0%**

# Retained Duty System

Appliance Availability	Mon - Fri (08:00 - 18:00)	Mon - Thu (18:00 - 08:00)	Weekend (Fri 18:00 - Mon 08:00)	Total
Ardrossan	84.96%	99.38%	98.73%	94.85%
Dreghorn	27.81%	87.33%	84.46%	68.56%
Dalry	36.12%	92.93%	80.68%	71.50%
Beith	94.85%	98.90%	99.29%	97.84%
Kilbirnie	38.58%	61.26%	67.52%	56.82%
Largs	99.19%	99.93%	99.97%	99.73%
Skelmorlie	32.85%	64.73%	51.64%	50.41%
Millport - 1	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Millport - 2	66.04%	89.08%	56.33%	70.14%
Brodick	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Lamlash	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
North Ayrshire	70.95%	92.62%	85.33%	82.71%
Ayrshire	70.18%	96.28%	90.41%	86.36%

Total Mobilisations	Total Time Deployed	No. of Personnel	Contracts
52	00:00:00	10	750%
75	00:00:00	11	775%
60	00:00:00	9	600%
83	00:00:00	12	1100%
61	00:00:00	10	750%
82	00:00:00	12	1075%
24	00:00:00	10	700%
24	00:00:00	12	1250%
14	00:00:00	8	800%
15	00:00:00	8	875%

# Glossary of Terms

## Term - What it means

### **ADF**

Accidental Dwelling Fire

### **CSET**

Community Safety Engagement Toolkit is an internal IT system used to record home fire safety visits and community safety activities

### **FSET**

Fire Safety Experiential Training is a bespoke training programme developed by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in Ayrshire and delivered to community planning partners to raise awareness of fire safety within the domestic environment

### **HFSV**

Home Fire Safety Visit

### **PDIR**

Post Domestic Incident Response, a term used by Prevention and Protection Directorate to indicate actions taken following attendance at a fire or other incident in the home. PDIRs include amongst things the offer of a free follow-up home fire safety visit

### **Primary Fires**

These include all fires in buildings, vehicles and outdoor structures or any fire involving casualties, rescues or fires attended by five or more appliances

### **RDS**

Retained Duty System. Professional on call firefighters who may have other primary employment responsibilities outside the Fire and Rescue Service but respond to emergency calls within their local area as and when required

### **RTC**

Road Traffic Collision

### **Secondary Fires**

These are the majority of outdoor fires including grassland and refuse fires unless they involve casualties or rescues, property loss or fire or more appliances attend. They include fires in single derelict buildings

### **Special Service**

Calls to incidents which are not fires or false alarms such as RTCs, rescues, flooding, incidents involving hazardous materials or the provision of assistance to other agencies

### **UFAS**

Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals. When an automatic fire detection and alarm system is activated as a result of anything other than an actual fire the activation is classed as a false alarm. If an attendance is made to such an event by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, then the event is recorded as an UFAS incident



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Working together for a safer Scotland

## Appendix B



# Chief Officer Report to the Board 2020-2021







# FOREWORD



**MARTIN BLUNDEN**

Chief Officer  
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service  
June 2021

I am pleased to present this first Chief Officer Annual Report to the Board of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS). In producing the report, I want to highlight key developments and successes from across the Service that have occurred during 2020 – 21.

This report allows me to personally acknowledge the hard work and commitment of all our staff. Whether staff work in an operational or support service capacity, I truly appreciate their efforts and commitments to serving the people of Scotland; even more so during what has been an incredibly challenging year.

In preparing this report I have drawn upon a wide range of Service strategies, reports and communications regarding what we do and what we achieve.

However, I know that so much more goes on across the service on a daily basis than I can capture in this report. I am truly thankful for the contributions of all those who proudly work for the Service and continue to serve their communities in so many capacities directly or in support of our front-line staff.

I hope in reading this report, readers find it to be both useful and of interest and, critically, I hope it demonstrates the breadth of what we do in serving communities across Scotland. It is my intention in future years to build on this initial report and to continue to reflect on our work and achievements on behalf of our communities over time.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As I have been considering how to go about setting out the events of the last financial year, our response to COVID-19 in support of the National Health Service (NHS) clearly dominates my thinking. However, that is only part of our story over the last 12 months. Amazing work has been undertaken by staff working at home (I believe that there is a distinction between 'at' and 'from' here, which I shall pick up later), working from fire stations, from Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) buildings across the estate and also those who have been mobile across Scotland to keep things running and to ensure that we can provide an emergency response to support the communities that we service e.g. mechanics, Radio Communications and Information Communication Technology (ICT) technicians.
- 1.2 Despite the most challenging year that any of us are likely to see in our careers, I believe that SFRS is in a very good place to meet the most significant challenges facing Scotland – recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, addressing climate change, tackling inequality, driving inclusive economic growth and strengthening partnership working, all of these issues which are central to the Government's policy agenda. Our response will shape the future of the Service, from how it is designed, to the support we provide to communities, and how we will work with our partners. Throughout 2020 and the pandemic, we have demonstrated our readiness to work with partners and communities to tackle inequality and to respond to local need. We have delivered food parcels and prescriptions and worked with care-experienced young people. I believe that being seen together in communities, with our partners, rising to the challenge of COVID-19 has bound us further to the people of Scotland. The pandemic has tested our ability to innovate, our resilience, our relationships and our business continuity arrangements and I believe that we are stronger as a result of this.
- 1.3 During the last year, there have been tales of sorrow and tragedy and our hearts go out to colleagues who have lost a loved one and I know that firefighters and support staff across the country have gone out of their way to support colleagues who have lost a loved one during this very difficult period. There are also others who have felt the financial impact of job losses within their family, had wedding plans or milestone birthdays affected or medical treatment postponed or cancelled. During this period, we have also seen unsurpassed care and heroism plus great innovation, creativity and agility. I genuinely hope that whilst we never face these same challenges again, that we do remember and continue to utilise all the positive things that we have gained in the face of such adversity.

## 2. RESPONSE TO COVID-19

2.1 On 17th March 2020, The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) established our response structures to support contingency planning and resilience in relation to the COVID-19 global pandemic. These structures operated at strategic and tactical levels, and were supported by various sub-groups. The pandemic had a significant impact upon communities across Scotland, and the day-to-day operations of the SFRS for the whole of 2020/21. During the winter of 2020/21, the challenges of continuing to deal with the impacts of COVID-19 were added to by other concurrent risks, including:

- EU Exit
- Anticipated adverse weather
- Extant threat from international and domestic terrorism
- On-going planning for COP26
- On-going planning for the European Championships

2.2 The ambition of the Service in relation to COVID-19 was set as follows:

**'To provide and secure a safe, effective and appropriate organisational posture and response for as long as is necessary, aligned to the Scottish Government COVID-19 strategy, whilst ensuring we can maintain our operational resilience and critical service delivery capability. At the same time, we will positively exploit the opportunities presented in the recovery, reset and renew phases to deliver continual improvement across all business areas and processes as we move out of the pandemic to a new normal.'**

### 2.3 STRATEGIC LEVEL

The SFRS Gold Group, comprised all members of the Strategic Leadership Team and met twice a week until May 2020 and then on a weekly basis from November 2020 to January 2021. Gold was chaired by the Chief Officer and, in his absence, by the Deputy Chief Officer. The Gold Group established the Service's Strategic Intentions which were to:

1. Proactively ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff;
2. Proactively protect our communities within the operationally challenging environment presented by COVID-19, D20 EU Exit and concurrent events.
3. Protect our communities from fire and other emergencies by adopting a risk-based approach to protection, prevention and response activities;
4. Maintain an effective, coordinated and integrated emergency response with partners in Scotland;
5. Maintain essential training and preparedness activity;
6. Maintain effective business continuity arrangements for SFRS;
7. Maintain financial and other appropriate internal controls;
8. Ensure our staff and communities are well informed through effective communication;
9. To ensure lessons learnt from the COVID-19 response are gathered, shared and acted upon, where appropriate, across SFRS;
10. Support a return to the new normality.

2.4 As anticipated the response phase and likelihood of a concurrent recovery phase occurred over an extended period of time. To support our decision making in this period we adopted an amended rolling decision log which provided a robust audit trail of all decisions, which strategic intention a decision supported, setting out clearly our rationale, any alternative actions considered, the implications of the

decision (financial, legal, political etc), actions taken to maintain provision of the service, the alternative controls developed because of the decision and any recovery actions required e.g. inserting a sunset clause setting out when a decision would be reviewed . This proved to be an extremely useful approach, it achieved clarity on what we were trying to achieve, what impact we expected to see as a result of the decision and a date by which we had to review earlier decisions. In the 'heat of battle', this structure was invaluable and did not rely on personalities, memory or the same people being present (there was an assumption that SLT or SMB members may well contract COVID-19 and become unavailable).

## 2.5 TACTICAL LEVEL

The Service has taken the opportunity to learn from the experiences of responding to the pandemic. What has been very clear from those experiences, is that the continued application of a flexible approach to how we work is an essential and fundamental element to delivering success. This approach allowed for the adoption of appropriate methodologies and postures, based on the organisational need and informed by the cyclical nature and associated impacts of the virus.

2.6 An example of this flexible approach is the different organisational governance and command methodologies we adopted. At the outbreak of the pandemic, SFRS formed a COVID-19 Tactical Advisory Group (COTAG), which adopted a formal command approach to support the swift and authoritative decisions that were required at the time. As some stability to the initial outbreak emerged in the summer of 2020 and as the country moved to a more stable situation, SFRS introduced the COVID-19 Senior Management Board (COSMB) in place of the COTAG, and this adopted a more discursive and collaborative approach. However, when the second spike of the pandemic emerged in late 2020, combined with the EU Exit process, the organisational posture again changed to a command approach through the introduction and operation of the D20 Tactical Advisory Group (D20 TAG). As of May 2021, and in response to the ever-improving situation, the organisation has now moved back to the Senior Management Board managing the response and associated consequences of the ongoing pandemic.

2.7 A further example of where a flexible approach worked in practice is the development of specific SFRS COVID-19 guidance in response to the overall situation as well as specific challenges, to ensure the maintenance of delivery of critical services, combined with the communication and sharing of that information across the organisation and beyond. This has included the creation of the internal COVID-19 Advisory Unit (CAU) within the Operations Function and a H&S COVID-19 Support Team. This has been supported and enabled by staff communications with a feedback loop so that the organisation continually listens to staff, which in turn informs reviews and promotes learning. The communication has not just been focused internally, it has developed, delivered and promoted updated prevention and protection messaging as the organisation adapted to the changing circumstances and identified emerging risks within the communities we serve.

2.8 Throughout the life of the pandemic to date, it has been very difficult to predict what may happen next. The application and continuation of this flexible approach ensured that SFRS remained relevant and could continue to deliver a critical service to all communities, where staff safety and community safety is at the forefront in all decision making.

## 2.9 SENIOR MANAGEMENT BOARD (RECOVERY, RESET AND RENEW)

At some point the pandemic will be over and life will return to a more normal posture. However it may not be possible or appropriate to return to how things were prior to the pandemic. The Service, as this report is being drafted, is still very much focused on responding to the challenges of COVID-19. However, at the same time it is recognised that this position cannot be maintained indefinitely. To support this transition, and when the time is right, SFRS recognises that recovery, reset and renew are critical elements of the overall process. In simplistic terms, this means:

**Recovery** – dealing with non critical backlogs that have developed over the period, e.g. training, recruitment, equipment testing, property maintenance, etc.

**Reset** – returning any adapted operating processes and approaches, where appropriate, to their pre pandemic position and/or posture

**Renew** – the implementation of new working processes and practices based on experience and knowledge gained from the pandemic or from other improvement processes and methodologies

2.10 The scale and complexity of the challenges and opportunities presented by COVID-19 are significant and this combined with the anticipated extended timescale that the pandemic is likely to be in place, presents an unprecedented challenge. To ensure that an appropriate level of command, control and decision making is in place, I have directed that this extraordinary Senior Management Board (SMB) has responsibility for managing the organisation’s approach to the principles of Response, Recovery, Reset and Renew.

2.11 This extraordinary SMB, is chaired by the Deputy Chief Officer, supported by the Directors of Service Delivery and Service Development and attended by all operational and non operational Heads of Function. The extraordinary SMB will meet fortnightly and will have clear responsibility for coordinating SFRS’s recovery, reset and renewal activities at a strategic level. This will be subject to continual review based on organisational need.

## 2.12 OPERATIONS CONTROL (OC)

At the outset of the pandemic OC staff were identified as critical personnel within SFRS due to the relatively small number of trained staff able to work within the OC environment. At the beginning of March 2020, when it was becoming clear that COVID-19 was expected to become an issue within the UK, initial action was taken to isolate the OCs and restrict access to the three (3) sites to essential personnel only and a resilience strategy was developed.

2.13 Due to the potential staffing absences due to the virus a decision was made by COTAG to instigate the first part of the resilience strategy. Several measures were put in place to ensure that staffing remained buoyant, and suitable management support was provided as follows:

- OC business continuity arrangements were enhanced and developed to allow the OCs to support each other should staffing absences occur;
- To create resilience within the OC management team, four (4) of the current day related OC Station Commanders took on a Flexi Duty Officer (FDO) role. This created an OC FDO for each OC on all four Command groups which ensured that OC Managers would be available to provide support to every OC and maintain the OCs bubbles should an Incident Support Room (ISR) be required;
- Work was carried out to contact and re-engage previously trained OC staff who had either, retired, left the service or been redeployed within the service in another role. This included wholtime firefighters and community safety advocates.

2.14 The original fears for staffing levels within the OCs did not materialise and reach critical levels. It is thought that the action taken to create island sites and protect OC staff contributed to maintaining staffing levels. However, the fact that no significant outbreak occurred within any of the OCs does indicate that the regular fogging and the measures put in place certainly focused OC staff awareness on the need to have a strict hygiene regime in place and maintain social distancing where possible. Nevertheless, the pandemic had some impact on staffing levels, and there were frequent occasions where numbers were low due to normal absence rates, combined with personnel self-isolating. This put significant pressure on staffing. However, on these occasions our resilience plans provided effective support for the OCs.

## 2.15 STAFF AVAILABILITY

As in other organisations, our staff availability was impacted by the virus. We saw increased staff absence particularly in the first few months, consistent with other organisations, with changing patterns evident as infection rates rose and fell across communities. It resulted in increased availability for Retained and Volunteer Firefighters (RVDS) in rural communities, predominantly due to the impact of the furlough scheme on the primary employment of many RVDS Staff.

- 2.16 To maintain operational availability and ensure there was some flexibility in the system to cope with spikes in staff absence, Gold approved a number of control measures to reduce organisational exposure to the virus and maintain work force resilience. This included crewing wholetime appliances on multi pump stations with 4 riders, reducing the agreed appliance confidence levels from 96% to 90% (with authorisation to drop to 80% should staff availability become acutely impacted) and, from 26 December 2020, the cessation of inter-station detached duties. To date these measures have been successful in reducing transmissions and delivering a high standard of Service Delivery, whilst managing the unplanned and unpredictable fluctuations in staffing levels. That said, it should be noted that business as usual staffing abstractions, such as non-watch-based training courses, have also greatly assisted the staff availability picture.

## 2.17 TASK CARDS

In order to provide additional procedural guidance for all personnel to follow in the event of a COVID-19 related event occurring in the workplace or operational environment, a series of Task Cards were developed to assist personnel. Task Cards are based on evolving planning scenarios and are dynamic in nature, due to the complexity of the situation and response required. Twenty-seven Task Cards were developed in response to the emerging challenges that the COVID-19 Pandemic presents and these received very positive feedback from staff and Unions. The organisational learning gained as a result of the introduction of Task Cards, has accelerated the requirement for a more streamlined and focused approach to operational documents. The task cards were designed to direct the user to the safety critical information immediately required. The approach of Task Cards is being tested within the HAZMAT suite of documents to determine their effectiveness in other operational environments.

## 2.18 COVID-19 ADVISORY UNIT

In October 2020, the Scottish Government launched Scotland's Strategic Framework detailing a tiered approach of five protection levels applied to local authority areas in response to current and predicted COVID-19 prevalence. The SFRS aligned with this approach in developing the guidance 'SFRS Response to Scottish Government COVID-19 Protection Levels' and established the COVID-19 Advisory Unit (CAU) to advise and support management teams in the implementation of COVID-19 mitigations according to local, regional or national viral prevalence.

- 2.19 Following the withdrawal of the SFRS D20 (All Risks) National Event Operational Plan and the cessation of COTAG, the decision was taken to transfer all COVID-19 related workstreams to a business as usual arrangement.

## 2.20 INFECTIONS

The COVID-19 pandemic began to impact on SFRS during Quarter 4 2019-20. The People and Organisational Directorate (POD) responded by allocating resources to support the SFRS response, employees and reviewing systems and processes to enable effective reporting and business continuity. All COVID-19 related absences do not count towards contractual sick pay entitlements, SFRS treated these absences as paid special leave and

therefore we needed to have a process in place to accurately record and monitor COVID-19 absences. The POD COVID-19 response team were responsible for recording all absences within a dedicated tracker and developed absence recording forms for managers to complete. This ensured each absence could be reported internally and externally to Scottish Government on a daily basis.

- 2.21 At the initial height of the pandemic in March 2020, SFRS had 608 cases. Over the following 4 months the numbers slowly declined before spiking again in October 2020 with 449 cases recorded. In November 2020 the numbers declined once again but quickly increased in December 2020. Following the festive period, there were 510 cases reported in January 2021. In total, SFRS has had a total of 3746 cases of COVID-19 and as of 6 May 2021, there was 19 cases recorded on our tracker. These figures are broken down into 359 confirmed cases, of which 54 were reportable to HSE under RIDDOR as potential workplace transmissions, 828 symptomatic and 2559 self-isolating cases. The most significant numbers were reported from our Wholetime Operational staff group (241); RVDS (890), Support Staff (312) and Operations Control (123).
- 2.22 Many processes and guidance documents have had to be introduced throughout the pandemic to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all employees and to minimise any workplace transmissions of the virus. Dedicated intranet pages were designed and regular staff communications issued. Task Cards and Safe Systems of Work (SSOW) were developed to formalise new cleaning and disinfection COVID-19 control measures within operational and workplace activities. A new COVID-19 Workplace Management Arrangement was developed that ensured all SFRS workplaces were risk assessed and made COVID-19 secure. Our cleaning of SFRS workplaces was enhanced through the identification of frequent touchpoints, introduction of sanitising stations and routine cleaning at the end of shifts undertaken and recorded in station logbooks. These measures all attributed to relatively low case numbers.

### 2.23 CLEANING

Task cards were initially put in place with SSOW for station cleaning so that station staff could do it themselves. Following discussions with Sodexo, our Soft FM supplier, it was established that it would be quicker to instruct a specialist sub-contractor (Regency) to carry out Fogging cleans. The advantage of using this system is that large areas can be cleaned and put back into operation quickly. Regency were usually on-site in around 2 hours from an initial call. It also gave station staff the peace of mind that a thorough clean of the building had been carried out. The fogging process is managed by the Soft FM Team who also initiated an on-call rota so that a member of the team is available 24/7 to liaise with the contractor and station staff. Up until the end of April 2021, Regency carried out 165 fogging cleans for SFRS.

- 2.24 In addition to this and using best practice from Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, preventative fogging was initiated in the 3 Control rooms every fortnight. The Control room staff relocated temporarily to standby control locations to enable fogging cleaning to be carried out.

### 2.25 PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

As highlighted in the national media, the supply of PPE was particularly challenging throughout the early stages of the COVID-19 response, particularly for NHS and care sector colleagues. Frontline SFRS staff required PPE when involved in close personal contact with the public e.g. Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) and when supporting partner agencies. A detailed PPE Strategy was developed and agreed through the COTAG. The team within Asset Management then worked tirelessly to maintain supply in accordance with the Service's requirements. Over 200,000 additional items of PPE were supplied to all fire stations, with some particularly challenging logistics to reach our more remote locations. Further disposable PPE was held in stock to anticipate the ongoing demand on the SFRS.



## 2.26 AGILE WORKING

As part of our Strategic Plan 2019-22 we are committed to making SFRS a great place to work where our people are safe, supported and empowered to deliver high performing innovative services. Agile working complements this ambition and supports a number of the objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan. To help inform the initial draft of the Framework, individual discussions were held with SMB Members and Trade Union representatives. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive towards adopting more agile ways of working with recognition of the benefits it offers SFRS as well as acknowledging that some challenges associated with agile working may need to be managed.

- 2.27 To help us achieve this, the Agile Working Framework is underpinned by a set of guiding principles through which we will enable more innovative and creative ways of working for our staff. The guiding principles are captured under the following categories:

### The Workforce and Culture

- Individuals and teams are accountable, outward-looking and customer focused
- Work is what we do and not the place where we go to work
- Employees are empowered to choose the workplace and space that best suits the task at hand
- There is organisational buy in to explore and enabling new ways of working that support maintaining high levels of performance and a well-balanced working life for staff
- Operates with the spirit of mutual trust between employee and manager

### The Workplace and Workspaces

- Workplaces are open, relaxed and wherever possible employees across different teams and directorates can work together in the same spaces
- Desks in SFRS premises are shared not 'owned'
- Alternative work settings will be provided within premises with a focus on improved spaces for team collaboration and offering employees a choice of settings
- Storage requirements are reduced
- Homeworking, flexible working and alternative remote working options are positively supported wherever possible

### Digital

- A broad range of modern and effective technologies are in use that modernise our working practices and routines
- We embrace and embed a 'paper light' approach
- Maximise digitising records and file storage
- We use ICT solutions to maximise networking, engagement, connection and collaboration across SFRS
- ICT solutions are continually developed or refreshed to support alternative work styles

- 2.28 Managers continue to discuss working preferences with their direct reports, and this will extend into the first quarter 2021/22. Unless it is for essential organisational reasons or to support an individual member of staff e.g. health and wellbeing, it is not expected that support staff will return in significant numbers until early 2022. Clearly this will be dependent upon guidance available at the time and this will be updated as the impact of COVID-19 related restrictions being released are assessed.

2.29 The ICT team has risen to the challenge of getting the vast majority of our office-based staff working from home very quickly, sourcing numerous additional laptops, screens and headsets, both from within SFRS capacity and also drawing on strong partnerships with our key suppliers. The pandemic further tested our ICT infrastructure as we had to rapidly adapt to home working for over 1000 members of staff. The learning from this will enable us to further evolve our approach to Agile Working. It also enables more innovative and creative ways of working for our staff. We aim to continue to further invest in our digital connectivity and cyber security to support these new ways of working into the future.

### 2.30 RECRUITMENT

As well as absence, we were faced with firefighter recruitment challenges as initially we had to suspend non-COVID-secure medical activities. The Service has now deployed alternatives to those methods until it is safe to return to normal practices. During this time, we suspended secondments, making use of short-term re-engagements and fast-tracking of trainees to increase our capacity and availability of staff. A review of the current recruitment and selection process was concluded in mid-2020 and the new process went live in March 2021. The revised process for recruiting Wholetime Firefighter has been developed following engagement with internal stakeholders on current methods used, recognition of risks/issues experienced e.g. no spirometry, longer processes due to COVID restrictions, and best practice improvements identified via an external benchmarking exercise undertaken with UK Fire and Rescue Services and other organisations. The new approach will see SFRS adopt an open national recruitment process, with regional practical assessment days and selection centres scheduled to take place at regular intervals in line with predicted workforce planning forecasts. Candidates will be prioritised and progressed based on resourcing demands and timescales will align with programmed training courses.

### 2.31 OPERATIONAL TRAINING

The pandemic had considerable and sustained impact on operational training. We radically reduced capacity at our training facilities by approximately 75% in order to observe social distancing requirements. This led to a commensurate reduction in the volume of training able to be delivered within each training location. We therefore concentrated the available training capacity upon risk critical skills that directly maintained a safe operational response; whilst at the same time suspending all non-risk critical training.

Wherever possible, maintenance of skills training was adapted so that it could be performed locally on-station or was delivered to staff remotely via electronic learning platforms. This has resulted in a considerable training backlog: for which a 2-3 year training recovery plan has been developed. Additional resources have been identified in order to support the delivery of this recovery training concurrently with critical business-as-usual training whenever pandemic restrictions allow.

### 2.32 BUILDING WORKS

Initially we also ceased construction work across our estate but reintroduced it under safe working practices and with reduced capacity. The work that we did with our Contractor at MacDonald Road in Edinburgh was identified as best practice by Scottish Government and used as a template for other construction companies. The combination of both factors has resulted in unplanned financial pressures, construction delays, and cash flow challenges for capital investment. As has been highlighted previously, both by us and Audit Scotland, we have a substantial capital backlog investment requirement (£389million in 2017), particularly within our property estate. Of our community fire stations, 61% are over 30 years old, and 52% have been assessed as being in a poor or worse condition. In addition, in 2019 we identified a further urgent issue in relation to an obsolete method of roof construction (Reinforced Aerated Autoclaved Concrete). These roofs remain present in 14 fire stations, and have been identified as a safety risk due to the potential for roof collapse. Temporary

emergency measures have been put in place (acro-props), with recurring resource costs. With firefighters spending more time on fire stations during the last year, this has further exacerbated the issue.

- 2.33 However, the safest and most cost-effective long-term solution in most cases will be to rebuild these stations. This would require a total potential investment of approximately £70million. The Community Risk Index Model (CRIM) project will support us in ensuring that our assets are deployed in the most effective manner across Scotland, and that our investment in facilities is appropriately targeted, consistent with the Scottish Government's recently published draft Infrastructure Investment Plan. If realised, our plans could form a significant social and economic renewal programme for communities where we have facilities located.

## 2.34 HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The pandemic brought into sharp focus, where home working has become more 'normal', the need to support staff to maintain their mental health and wellbeing. Our staff have been provided with a comprehensive package of resources and support, which will be maintained post-pandemic. It is hoped this will help protect our workforce from the as-yet unknown long-term effects of this period.

- 2.35 In early March 2020, the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) recommended the Mental Health Strategy to the Board for approval. The Mental Health Group is closely aligned with the work of the strategic COVID-19 Wellbeing Group established early in the pandemic to support the overall SFRS response to the pandemic. The synergy between both groups comes from considering how best SFRS can support the mental health and overall wellbeing of employees during the pandemic and beyond.
- 2.36 Our Mental Health Strategy is available to read on iHub and SharePoint and acts as a road-map to ensure we work together as a Service to support and manage our mental health. Our strategy outlines how the Service is committed to creating a supportive environment where staff can speak openly and honestly about their thoughts and feelings without stigma or judgement. We are already seeing positive outcomes from the public commitment we have made to our staff.
- 2.37 It is true that mental ill health is a very complex issue. Personal experiences, family life, relationships, how people see themselves, the social circumstances people find themselves in, all determine their own unique state of well-being. The nature of the work of our Service means our staff can often be exposed to challenging and traumatic experiences as well as pressing and significant workloads. That is why we need to have an honest and truthful conversation about mental health across the SFRS.
- 2.38 Our partnership with the Rivers Centre in Edinburgh provides staff with access to specialist mental health support and counselling. Such partnerships are absolutely integral to creating a mentally healthy and happy workforce. Additionally, our recent celebration of mental health awareness week saw staff taking part in online classes to improve both physical and mental health. We saw then how taking time to prioritise their bodies and minds can lead to a healthier workforce.
- 2.39 During the last year we reviewed the literature we make available to staff so that it is more user friendly and it is easier to navigate to the most appropriate support by creating a dedicated health and wellbeing (COVID-19) site. We have also promoted partnerships with Sapper Support and Talk Group 20 as well as developing our partnership with Lifelines (Emergency Service in Scotland) and the Rivers Centre with the Lifelines website launched in November 2020. We currently have post incident support online sessions hosted by Lifelines for Managers and Firefighters in the West SDA. Plans are in place to deliver similar sessions for the East and North SDAs. Our 2020 SFRS skills survey identified over 40 employees with Mental Health First Aid training (MHFA). The total number of employees who have undertaken this training is likely to be higher and, led by the MHG, work is ongoing by the Health and Wellbeing team to engage with trained staff and active local groups to inform the SFRS wide approach to developing MHFA capability and access to support for all staff. We have also held very popular online mindfulness and exercise sessions for staff and these are available for download and will continue to be developed in 2021/22.

2.40 However, a healthy and supportive work environment is reliant on our managers and management processes to create the positive environment that enables our staff to flourish. This is something that we are actively working on as well.

## 2.41 STAFF COMMUNICATION

As part of staff engagement around the pay offer for uniformed staff, we ran a series of online evening sessions using Skype for Broadcast for RVDS staff who were unable to attend day-time meetings. As the feedback from these was positive we made use of the broadcast platform to communicate and connect with staff and this continued across the course of the year and in to 2021. The Chief Officer COVID-19 broadcasts were originally held weekly or bi-weekly but switched to monthly as of June 2020 and thereafter they were conducted as issues required them. The most recent occurred in June 2021. Initially, the broadcasts consisted of the Chief Officer addressing staff directly with key messaging around COVID-19 followed by a real-time Q&A session. Questions could also be submitted by staff in advance. Over the months, we have developed the broadcasts to include information on areas of business other than COVID-19, as well as a PowerPoint presentation sharing good news stories and recognising staff achievements across the Service. Video recordings of the broadcast are also available via iHub and SharePoint.

2.45 Although the viewing/participation figures fluctuated, the benefits of a leadership broadcast are clear. Good leadership communication is fundamental to a successful organisation, with visibility and accessibility both important within this. Face-to-face remains the most effective and preferred form of communication for staff but is not without its logistical challenges. The leadership broadcasts provide an ideal platform. It is important to view the broadcasts as part of the wider leadership communications and engagement activity and further consideration is being given to develop a plan around this for the Strategic Leadership Team. Current leadership communications activity includes SLT station visits and corporate messaging through the staff and managers' briefs and the Communications team are developing a plan to further enhance leadership communications.

## 2.46 FIRE FATALITIES

Following the lowest rate of yearly fire fatalities for the SFRS of 27 in 2019/20, it was noticeable that there had been a significant spike in the first quarter of 2020/21 (16). It was recognised that there was an association with fires in the home and criteria relating to the victim's social characteristics. From this data, the Service initiated the 'Make the Call' Campaign.

2.47 The current situation has required us to find new and innovative ways of reaching those who are most at risk – that's why we invited the public's help now and beyond lockdown. While we halted the majority of our home fire safety visits, other than to those deemed very high risk, to help suppress the spread of COVID-19 we developed new ways of engaging with people including online tools giving bespoke safety advice as well as telephone questionnaires and direct verbal advice via telephone.

2.48 This campaign involved the Service asking friends, family, neighbours and carers to help us reach those most at risk from fire injury and fatality. Whilst it is not unprecedented to see increases in casualties and fatalities over a short period of time, we want to reach people who are over 50 and smoke, who also either live alone, have mobility issues or are using medical oxygen. It has been clear for several years that this group of people are at greater risk, regardless of lockdown. The campaign is estimated to have reached 2 million adults in Scotland via radio (being heard 16.5 million times), 2 million adults in Scotland via television (including 70% of those over 60), 1.25 million people via social media and has also featured in print press (reaching 40% of C2DE adults over 50 – the socio demographic group which is most often at risk from fire).

## **2.49 RELATIONSHIPS AT A NATIONAL LEVEL**

The Chair and myself continue to have positive and constructive regular meetings with the Minister for Community Safety, the Sponsor Unit and the Director for Justice. We were delighted to receive a letter, on behalf of the Service, thanking our staff for their dedication and commitment in response to COVID-19.

- 2.50 Work remains ongoing to develop the role of the Service as a key collaborative partner, including through the Reform Collaboration Group (RCG). SFRS is currently leading on the following initiatives:

### **2.51 OUT OF HOSPITAL CARDIAC ARREST**

We continue to work with the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) in responding to the National Strategy to improve survivability rates for Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrests. We have reached an agreement with SAS to provide Clinical Governance for the Service in relation to all medical related work that we undertake when managing incidents. This gives further reassurance to our operational staff that they are equipped, trained and supported to the highest levels.

### **2.52 MARAUDING TERRORIST ATTACK**

We continue to explore how we can bring about a fully trained and equipped response in the event of a Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA). We are leading work with Police Scotland and the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) to deliver joint On Scene Commander (OSC) training, where officers from each of the services work together using Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) to make collective decisions at a simulated MTA incident. SFRS National Inter-Agency Liaison Officers (NILOs) are to receive enhanced trauma management and warm zone coordinator training, which will be put into practice in planned multi-agency exercises later in the year. These events will seek to exercise the joint decision making of OSCs from each of the tri-services working together at MTA type incidents, prioritising the rescue and treatment of casualties to provide an effective joint response. The exercises will provide valuable experience and learning for OSCs and other responders from all services in the run up to COP26 in November.

### **2.53 JOINT ASSET SHARING GROUP**

We continue to develop a systematic approach to considering opportunities for station co-location. Currently there are 834 stations operated by the Emergency Services (356 SFRS, 349 Police Scotland, and 129 SAS). There are now 31 locations where at least two of the three emergency services share indoor space. We are leading a project to implement a Blue-Light Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure across Scotland. The project will last 18-24 months and involves the following partners: Police Scotland, Scottish Ambulance Service, Transport Scotland, Scottish Futures Trust, Energy Saving Trust, NHS, RNLI and the Northern Lighthouse Board. SFRS have already implemented 68 sites across our estates with more to follow.

### **2.54 MULTI-AGENCY COMMUNITY SAFETY OFFICER**

We are working to introduce a role that combines all aspects of the three emergency services and local authority community safety and resilience work into one jointly employed individual. The intention is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of all three emergency services and the local authority in remote rural areas. A multi-agency project team has been developed within the RCG and nominated leads have come together to discuss the role, how it can be shaped to meet the needs of the local community and add value.

- 2.55 All three emergency services have conducted a gap analysis to identify their service delivery and structural provisions across Scotland; with a focus on identifying communities that would benefit from the deployment of a role of this type. On completion of this process, a framework of options will be developed to enable the role to be dynamic in nature and responsive to the needs of the identified communities of place, interest and circumstance.

- 2.56 We are also actively engaged in working with partners throughout the wider public sector. Increasingly we are sharing premises with our blue light partners and continue to explore innovative ways to provide facilities that meet the needs of communities in the most cost-effective manner. Work has been undertaken to agree the space and design requirements for community fire stations of the future which can be scaled to suit local needs, including multi-agency working.

## **2.57 RELATIONSHIPS WITH UNIONS**

- During the period of the pandemic, we have actively supported additional facility time, allowing representatives to support their members and to attend meetings and, to my knowledge no requests were refused during this period. Additional meetings were arranged with representative bodies, including weekly meetings with the Deputy Chief Officer and the Director of Service Delivery and a separate weekly meeting with the Head of People and Organisational Development, to discuss COVID-19 matters specifically. There is also weekly FBU engagement with management in our COVID-19 Wellbeing Group, which was established to deal with the Health and Wellbeing impact of this pandemic on our employees. These are over and above the normal partnership working and engagement meetings scheduled with the FBU e.g. Employee Partnership Forum and the Partnership Advisory Group. Whilst the recognised Trade Unions will inform and update their members on these discussions and decisions taken, the SFRS as an employer has a responsibility to ensure that all our employees, including circa 4000 staff who are not in a Trade Union, are engaged and communicated with as decisions are made. This is a point that came up very clearly during the broadening the role conversations with staff and also in the Staff Survey of 2018. Our 8000 staff have a voice and they want us to hear that, not just circa 3,200 who are members of the Fire Brigades Union. Our ongoing commitment is to get the best pay, terms and conditions for all of our staff, by listening to them. There are many people who do not belong to a union and do not want to, and it is our responsibility to provide them with an opportunity to influence and shape the direction of the Service, the services we provide and the remuneration we pay. This must be in tandem with the Service and the unions working together in a true partnership approach so that our staff and the communities we serve receive the best from us. The last 12 months have been fairly difficult at times, with little being addressed as issues by the unions through the recognised mechanisms set out in the Working Together Framework, but with and many plaudits given to the Service in the regular meetings that were undertaken.
- 2.58 We were due to undertake a review of Trade Union Facility time at the end of March 2020 in line with normal business requirements as our trade union facility time costs the Service £425,000 per annum. Due to COVID-19, the Service wrote to the FBU in early March 2020 saying that this review would now take place in July 2020, following some UK benchmarking work. In the interim the Service temporarily reduced the number of paid full-time officials from 8.25 to 3, requiring the others to retrain for operational duties. Subsequently only 1 returned back on the run. The Service faced some significant challenge from the Convenor of the Justice Committee over the requirement for FBU officials to returning to operational duty as well as any reduction in the number of full-time officials. The benchmarking work showed that we had a significantly higher number of full-time FBU officials than any other Service. The London Fire Brigade, the closest to SFRS in size, has four full time FBU officials, 2 paid for by London Fire Brigade and 2 paid for by the FBU. As a result of the benchmarking exercise, the number of full-time officials paid for by the Service has been reduced to 3 and the FBU are funding the other full-time officials as is common practice elsewhere.
- 2.59 We have been very flexible in our approach to supporting employees in this unprecedented situation, either due to a requirement to shield, to support those with close family members who required to shield, or to support those with caring responsibilities. Steps have been taken to ensure that all employees in these situations maintain full pay. We are satisfied that no employee has been financially in detriment, due to any temporary change in any policy, which meets the Service's intention to maintain the pay of employees in these circumstances. Periods of absence due to shielding did/will not have an effect on future sick pay or other entitlements, such as the accrual of holidays, which continued to accrue during the period of

absence, and no account is taken of the period in any future absence management process. The SFRS continues to follow the high-level principles of the STUC/Scottish Government Fair Work Statements, with their application being tailored to the specific circumstances of the Service. Unfortunately, the FBU do not agree with the approach that the Service took last year and are taking us to Court for sexual and disability discrimination with the case due to be heard in July 2021.

- 2.60 The Firefighter role has been broadened during the COVID-19 pandemic to include additional activities, for example, driving ambulances/patient transport, community assistance such as delivering food and medicines and body movement. These changes have been supported through discussions and agreement with the FBU. Throughout the year there were many erroneous reports that the broadening the role discussions were still live and a deal was close. In various letters exchanged with the General Secretary of the FBU during the year where we exchanged similar comments about being “committed to continued dialogue...and not walking away from the talks” and it was reiterated that there is (now) no additional funding from Scottish Government to fund a pay settlement beyond the current NJC award. The response from the Union stated...“This suggests, sadly, that these recommended discussions would be seriously hampered from the start. We would prefer to continue discussions without such a starting point and would hope to build on the positive aspects of the previous round of talks, of which there were several.” Subsequent to a letter from Matt Wrack in September 2020, we received a letter in February 2021 asking to “seek to immediately continue negotiations on the broadening the role of firefighters for pay...”
- 2.61 Our response to this letter was to set out the different environment that we now operate in, not just because of COVID-19 but also due to the substantial piece of staff engagement that we carried out in the Autumn of 2020 regarding our future direction. This was as a direct result of staff feedback about wishing to have their voice heard. We were clear that “...we are at an early stage of identifying the route map to support this direction and vision...” and “...are now engaging further with our staff, all staff unions, the public and our wider stake holders on this matter.” The attainment of our long-term vision for the Service will likely take several years to fully realise and it will have important implications for the roles and responsibilities of the Service and consequently of firefighters. Our offer to the FBU was to use the Vision and “...other developments, to inform our joint discussions on how we improve pay for firefighters in Scotland.” Confirming that “...we remain fully committed to doing more for our communities and working with our staff, and the Fire Brigades Union, to achieve this in Scotland....however, I would like to reaffirm that (the) support from the Scottish Government is likely to be conditional on real progress, i.e. tangible deliverables, being made on the future roles and responsibilities of firefighters in meeting community needs in Scotland.”

## **2.62 FINANCE**

Overall, COVID-19 has resulted in both savings and additional costs for the Service. In some cases, savings made in 2020/21 will result in additional ‘catch-up’ costs in 2021/22, while the sum of these issues was challenging, we saw throughout the pandemic, a remarkably positive commitment among operational staff and support staff to work with us in bringing these changes about.

- 2.63 The Scottish Government allocated funding to SFRS for 2020/21 of £333.26million. This funding comprised a Resource and Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) of £276.007M and £32.5M respectively, and £24.753M in respect of depreciation (Ring-fenced or “non-cash” DEL). Considering the forecast financial position for this financial year, arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, it was agreed in November 2020 to return £1M of DEL budget to Scottish Government to support wider COVID-related spending pressures which was accepted. Following the December monitoring position, it was agreed to advise the Scottish Government that a further £1M of DEL budget could also be returned which was not taken up until the end of the financial year. The end of year position was an underspend of £1.943million once the agreed budget adjustments were reflected and this (forecast) position includes costs for COP26 and net savings of £3.035million in respect of COVID-19.

- 2.64 Following a capital re-prioritisation exercise by Scottish Government in June 2020, SFRS was allocated additional Capital DEL funding of £4.350m for 2020/21, to be spent on minor works. The Property Team has developed a long list of potential minor works projects, predominantly fire station based, to address poor condition, dignified facilities, resilience, carbon reduction and security that will be escalated from future years of the Capital Programme to improve the overall condition and suitability of the estate. In light of this additional funding, the programme has also been realigned to bring forward £0.35million investment in ICT equipment to support ongoing homeworking throughout COVID-19 and beyond, in accordance with Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance. Capital receipts have been budgeted from the sale of surplus property at Mounthooly (£0.556m) and the sale of non-operational vehicles (£0.194m). Scottish Government's ambition to phase out the need for diesel and petrol cars and vans by 2032, is articulated in Transport Scotland's "Switched On Scotland" action plan. As part of that plan, Transport Scotland awarded SFRS with a Grant of £0.624m in September 2019 for the purchase of Electric Vehicle Charging Points Infrastructure, at various locations across the Service. A further Grant of £2.095m was awarded in November 2020 to lease 62 Low Emission Electric Cars (£0.644m) over a three-year period, and to purchase additional Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (£1.451m). Grant conditions allow for orders to be placed by the end of the financial year, with delivery within the following year. As such, total spend from these grants within this financial year will range between £1.326m and £2.075m.

## **2.65 ECONOMIC, EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE USE OF RESOURCES**

- Due to essential restrictions, the Service's ability to recruit, train and conduct routine fitness and medical assessments for both new and existing uniformed staff, has been significantly impacted during the pandemic. As we move towards a relaxation of restrictions and a return to a form of normality, and recognising that current capacity in both Training and People and Organisational Development will be unable to deliver all the competing demands, SLT have been considering the Service's strategic recovery priorities. Due to recruitment and training challenges across all Duty Systems in January 2021 we had forecasted an increasing gap between agreed establishment requirements and crewing levels. With the 5 Watch Duty System (5WDS) predicted to be between 165 (5.5%) and 240 (7.9%) deficient of the budgeted 3021 Target Operating Model (TOM) by Quarter 4 2021/22 and Quarter 2 2022/23 respectively. With the Retained Duty System (RDS) up to 1000 (30%) deficient (based on legacy requirements) by Quarter 4 2021-22.
- 2.66 It should be noted that continual evaluation of the current 5WDS minimum crewing level of 4 was established at the emergence of the pandemic and is still ongoing. Following the above predicted shortfalls a number of forums have focused on responding and recovering our reduced establishments levels. The current planned maximum intakes of Wholetime Trainee Firefighters over the next three years has been increased from 34 to 48 every 13-14 weeks in order to maintain the TOM at its current level. The RVDS Leadership Forum is placing a renewed focus on this area of the Service, however, significant effort and innovative thinking is required to concurrently recover the RVDS establishment. Our collective efforts have resulted in improvements of earlier predicted establishment levels to those of 5WDS to 119 (3.9%) with RDS stabilising at 24 % (823). We are working to further improve attraction, recruitment, selection and increase external training course capacity to meet our TOM.
- 2.67 Measures to reduce the transmission of the virus have created an increasing back log in training specialist and driver training. In addition, routine fitness and medical assessments are both well over 1000 behind schedule. From a WDS establishment perspective the Service was in a similar situation in 2017/18 when recruitment was paused for six months. It then took a concerted effort to regain the Target Operating Model (TOM), recovering this in January 2020, only for the pandemic to impact upon the TOM to previous reduced levels.
- 2.68 Current COVID-19 related constraints placed on Training are impacting on the capacity of both facilities and instructors. It is predicted that concurrency of delivery to recover against establishments and skills will pose a significant challenge both in terms of the ability to release numbers of candidates from Service Delivery for



training events and the availability of the facilities themselves. The restricted use of Training facilities is having a direct impact on the volume of training able to be delivered at any one training venue. This is a direct result of COVID-19 Work Place Assessments and associated Safe Systems of Work to maintain physical distancing. It is assumed that such restrictions will continue throughout the 2021 calendar year. The Training Function have developed a recovery plan which has identified three critical areas which need prioritised focus; Driving, Incident Command Level 1 Development and Specialist Rescue. Any increase in the requirement to deliver additional Trainee Firefighters will have an adverse impact on the ability to deliver against these areas unless capacity is increased. Revised, flexible and innovative delivery models for all training courses have been produced as part of the recovery plan. However it is foreseeable that additional investment within instructional staff, welfare facilities and infrastructure is required to further enhance training venue capacity and therefore increase delivery.

- 2.69 There is also a significant turnover of commanders at all levels in the Service, a key enabler of the Recovery Route map will include the Service's leadership capacity and capability. A renewed focus on Succession Planning has been supported through the 2020 review of the Leadership Development Centre Policy, which puts a clear focus on the delivery of the succession pipeline through effective talent management and development relevant to today's operating environment.
- 2.70 A range of decisions and actions to support the management of operational availability that will assist in mitigating impacts of the pandemic were agreed. These include:
- Continuation of the ability to run 5WDS appliances at 4, subject to full evaluation
  - Reduced Confidence Levels, currently agreed down to 90% 5WDS appliance availability
  - Revised re-engagement policy
  - Development of a bank workers policy
  - Skills development and talent management, delivered via our leadership development centres and onwards development
- 2.71 A key enabler of the Recovery Route map will include the SFRS's leadership capacity and capability. The renewed focus on Succession Planning has been supported through the 2020 review of the leadership development centre policy, which puts a clear focus on the delivery of the succession pipeline through effective talent management and development relevant to today's operating environment.
- 2.72 Following the annual budget approval by the Board, as in previous years some budget revisions for 21/22 were made which included revised savings from COVID-19 and additional apprenticeship levy income. These revisions including the £1.4million already set aside for asset management and £2million for Recovery, Reset and Renew have resulted in £4.5million being allocated to support recovery activities in 2021/22 and 2022/23. SLT met on the 14th April 2022 and approved 44 business cases which totalled £7.2million (£3.9million on resource staffing and £3.3million on non-staff resourcing) and this over allocation is due to initiatives likely to take some time to commence and fully resource. Progress on these initiatives will be closely monitored during the year and this work will be reported to and scrutinised by the Board.

### **2.73 PROGRAMME & PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

In 2020 the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) engaged consultancy support to complete a Strategic Review of our organisational readiness to deliver the outcomes set out in our Strategic Plan 2019-2022 and support our emerging Long-Term Service Vision. The review resulted in a set of recommendations for improvement, some of which were deemed critical, including a number that related to strengthening the capacity and capability of the Service if we are to successfully implement change programmes and projects.

- 2.74 The key outcome from the work we need to undertake is to strengthen the Service Development Directorate (SDD), including the Portfolio Office (PO). The PO oversees the work of the Service Delivery Model Programme (SDMP) and also has responsibility for the ongoing development of the underpinning change management systems and processes. The requirement to strengthen our approach to the programme management of change is driven in the main by the work the Service has commissioned via the Community Risk Index Model (CRIM).
- 2.75 The SDMP was formed in 2019, following the merging of two main projects under the previously named Service Transformation Programme. These two projects are SFRS Futures Vision and Rebalancing the Frontline. The overall aim of the SDMP is: 'To undertake short, medium and long-term scenario planning, which informs an analysis of risk across Scotland's communities, in order to identify where the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, working within the confines of the resources available and in partnership, can deliver a balanced prevention, protection and response model that will contribute to eliminating, reducing or mitigating known or predicted community risk'. The SDMP consists of three interrelated projects, the Community Risk Index Model (CRIM), Station and Appliance Review (SAR) and Demand Based Duty Systems (DBDS). The CRIM will identify and predict Community Risk from factors such as historical incident activity, socio-economic and geodemographic profiles. To support the development of the CRIM, the SDMP team includes a Strategic Data Analyst who is currently seconded from North Ayrshire Council. Further support is provided by a dedicated Geographical Information's Systems (GIS) Officer.
- 2.76 The intended outcomes of the CRIM will underpin and support the development of potential change scenarios within current SFRS operational response models. Identification of known and predicted holistic Community Risk will support change options developed by the SAR & DBDS projects. To support the Service in making future change decisions, enabled by the CRIM, the PO must be strengthened to act in support of the decision-making process, including how we manage future budgetary pressures and how we plan and deliver existing and future change options. During the last quarter of 2020/21 we recruited a Head of Function for the PO and we will further strengthen the PO during 2021/22.

## **2.77 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

This Performance Management Framework (PMF) defines how the Service manage our performance in achieving the priorities set by the Scottish Ministers in the Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2016 and the outcomes and objectives set out in our Strategic Plan. In the spirit of openness and transparency and to assure accountability, the PMF supports the effective reporting of performance nationally, locally and across the Service. It ensures that our people, and our key stakeholders, have access to appropriate performance information to fulfil their duties, support sound evidence-led decision making and effect robust scrutiny. Our approach to performance management recognises that success cannot be achieved by acting alone. We are committed to working with our partners and the communities that we serve to further improve our performance. We are committed to working with our partners to develop measures which better indicate the level of effectiveness of our joint intervention and prevention activities.

- 2.78 We keep the PMF under regular review. Particular attention is paid to the measures we have identified and the targets we have set to ensure they remain relevant and current. This informs decisions and communicates performance against our changing landscape.
- 2.79 During the review in 2020/21, a wide range of stakeholders were involved in discussions and asked for their views on the current Framework and associated performance measures. This included the relevant Board Committee members from non-Executives to Executive leads. Collaboration has also taken place with every Directorate through individual meetings with Heads of Functions and their teams.

- 2.80 The engagement resulted in amendments to the draft 2021 Performance Framework and laid the foundations for further discussions as the Service continues work to identify our new normal following COVID-19 and our wider change ambitions. The review of the PMF has been undertaken at a time when, due to COVID-19 and the desire to progress our wider change ambitions, future operations remain unclear.
- 2.81 Additionally, we await revisions to the Fire and Rescue Framework from Scottish Government which would trigger a review of our Strategic Plan and then the need to re-align our performance measures. As a consequence of the context under which this review took place these light-touch revisions have been made. The engagement last year has, however, laid the foundations for future change and we expect that the document will see more substantial revisions in 2022 to align with the updated Fire and Rescue Framework and next Strategic Plan which will be laid before Parliament in October 2022.

## **2.82 GENDER EQUALITY**

The SFRS has general obligations under the Equality Act (EA) 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equalities and to foster positive relationships between those who share a particular protected characteristic under the EA 2010 and those who do not. The Scottish Government (SG) has addressed period poverty by providing access to free sanitary products for visitors and staff in SG buildings, to support equality, dignity and rights for those who menstruate and to ensure that lack of access to products does not impact on an individual's ability to fully participate in their SG business, and to set an example for other public sector bodies in Scotland. It is right that we have agreed to do the same. The provision of free sanitary products evidences the commitment of the SFRS to advancing gender equality and that the provisions will be available to reduce period poverty and for those employees who may require these in an emergency where they do not have their own provisions available.

- 2.83 A programme of cultural change under our Building the Future Together Programme has also been introduced and seeks to create an organisational culture and employer brand that emphasises staff participation and supports a positive working environment. We recognise that Learning and Development Occupational segregation is a key challenge and that women, the disabled and ethnic minorities are unrepresented at senior level within our Service, and particularly within the uniformed management structure. We are investing heavily in robust and inclusive talent management activities that aim to address this issue. In 2020 we launched our Development Centre for All which is open to all colleagues to support their professional development. In 2020 the positive action team hosted three female only events which aimed to showcase a career in the fire service and address misconceptions. The content focused on debunking myths, providing an overview of the roles available, featured guest speakers who shared their career history and experiences and crucially provided an opportunity to build relationships between current and prospective colleagues. Each of these main events were followed with an invitation to our Firefighter Fit event which aims to assist potential applicants prepare for the selection processes used during the Firefighter selection process. Following the success of the content and format of this event, it will be repeated for another female only cohort and rolled out for other underrepresented groups starting with LGBT and BAME.

## **2.84 FUTURE VISION**

In early 2020 plans were underway to have a whole system leadership engagement session, however, in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic the plans to have an auditorium event were revised and transitioned into 3 virtual 'Online Leadership Engagement' sessions. These online events were the first step in engaging with the SFRS middle management cohort to start to shape the long term strategic vision, the 'Future Vision', with 289 staff taking part in the events. The drive to deliver a 'Future Vision' for the SFRS has been one of the organisation's key objectives since the launch of the Strategic Plan 2019-2022. The SFRS are continuing on the journey to deliver a 'first class fire and rescue service for all the people of Scotland' and the development of the Long Term Strategic Vision will further strengthen the commitment to delivering transformation across

the whole system. What remains unchanged is the need to provide our communities with the highest quality service and this can only be delivered through a highly skilled, motivated and energised workforce supported by empowered leaders. In developing the programme for the online leadership engagement events, we acknowledged that our middle managers are one of our most critical assets in delivering the 'Future Vision'. They will ultimately drive the success or failure of the changes that will deliver the vision. We set out to ensure that they know that they are valued; we need them; they have experience; they have knowledge of our organisation; they have relationships and networks inside and outside the SFRS. Within the SFRS we are well developed and well-practised in leading our teams in responding to emergency situations. However, in delivering change and improvement we often find that we are presented with challenges that have no obvious or easy solution. With this in mind the session's aim was to ask our teams to reflect on our organisational culture and ways of working. The focus for SFRS is on continuing to build a culture that embodies our purpose and values and creates the environment to think innovatively, one that empowers our leaders to engage with individuals and teams across the organisation. Whether we describe it as inclusive, authentic, agile or adaptive styles of leadership the ethos remains the same; values driven leadership that promotes and delivers innovation, engagement and adaptability in how we deliver services, taking employees with us as we progress towards the vision.

2.85 Engagement continued across September 2020 to capture the views of staff across the organisation to inform the development of the long-term strategic vision of the Service. Over the course of three months, a cross-section of more than 800 staff were involved in a range of different engagement sessions and processes. Their input was invaluable and I would like to thank them for taking the time to participate in this process.

While there was no single area or topic where full consensus was reached, a number of common themes emerged throughout the engagement process which reflect a majority view. Many of these are interconnected and some themes are reflected under more than one heading however, broadly comments can be categorised under the key themes listed below:

- What staff value about SFRS
- Appetite for change
- What should we start doing to support change and what should we continue
- Creating capacity for change (or what we should stop)
- Key partners
- Terms and Conditions
- Training
- Culture of SFRS
- Staff Involvement

2.86 However, a number of other issues emerged which have been raised before in previous engagement processes including the Staff Survey and engagement sessions regarding the broadened role.

2.87 The role of the FBU and the issues around the terms and conditions for wholetime, retained and volunteer staff remain a significant area of concern. It was felt strongly that more could be done to support retained staff in particular. Staff are wary that change will be forced upon them and staff who are not members of a representative body want to be assured they too will have a say in the development of the Service. The question of how the Service can progress without securing the support of the FBU was raised frequently – as was the issue of the FBU not being representative of all staff views within the organisation.

Both FBU members and non-members are frustrated that a pay offer and broadened role were not agreed last year, albeit for different reasons. Staff also feel there is still a disconnect between management and frontline staff and that we work in silos rather than together to achieve common outcomes. Bureaucracy, centralised decision-making and the way in which policies and procedures are developed and disseminated were all highlighted as key areas for improvement. Finally, many staff commented they welcomed the opportunity to participate in the discussion, value being part of this process and want this level of engagement to continue.

## 2.88 LOCAL SENIOR OFFICER AREAS

Following the move to a single service in 2013, the SFRS restructured to create 17 Local Senior Officer (LSO) Areas across Scotland structurally aligned to one or more Local Authority Area. There were 5 in the East SDA, 5 in the North SDA and 7 in the West SDA. Over the intervening 8 years the SFRS has reduced the number of LSO areas. The merger of Fife, Stirling & Clackmannanshire in the East SDA was approved in 2018 and implemented in 2019.

- 2.89 In 2020, following a review, the merger of Aberdeenshire & Moray and Aberdeen City was approved by the Strategic Leadership Team and this facilitates coterminous alignment with the Local Resilience Partnership (LRP) boundaries, as well as Police Scotland administrative boundaries. When this is implemented in July 2021, this will remove duplication of attendance at the LRP and its sub-groups which enables the Service to better coordinate workloads that come from the LRP. It also enhances situational awareness across the entire region under a single LSO and was a move supported by all three Chief Executive Officers.
- 2.90 In early 2021, as a continuance of the above review, the merger of North and South Lanarkshire was approved by SLT. A single Lanarkshire LSO Area is, again, coterminous with Police Scotland Lanarkshire Division, NHS Lanarkshire and the Lanarkshire Local Resilience Partnership. It will streamline large elements of partnership working and simplify our local engagement processes. When this is implemented in July 2021, it will also create a larger Detached Duty Cluster which will support operational readiness and resilience in the future. Again, both Chief Executive Officers fully support this move.
- 2.91 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 and the subsequent plans helped to continue directing the Service through its initial transformation journey, forging our place as a national organisation with a strong sense of local accountability. The publication of our Strategic Plan 2019-22 in October 2019 instigated a requirement to carry out a mandatory review of all Local Fire and Rescue Plans. As part of this review a public consultation exercise was held between January and March 2020, where we asked our stakeholders to share their views on local service provision. This exercise gave us the opportunity to engage with the communities directly served by local plans and ask them whether our local priorities remain relevant to community need and risk, as well as being aligned to our Strategic Plan. On completion of the public consultation exercise, each of our Local Senior Officers interrogated the feedback from their area and provided a Local Plan Review Report. Each of these Reports have been closely scrutinised and have contributed to the development of a Consolidated Local Plan Review Report.. As well as seeking the views through the public consultation exercise, findings from a recent light-touch Local Scrutiny Review were reviewed and considered. Performance data was also included to look at our progress against the local priorities set within our local plans.
- 2.92 Building on the intelligence we gathered during the consultation of our Strategic Plan 2019-22 we re-engaged with our key stakeholders to seek further views on our local service delivery. From January 2020 to mid-March 2020, an online survey was shared with our stakeholders and the public to give them the opportunity to tell us whether they thought we were making progress against the priorities set within the current local plans. The question set also allowed us to consider the relevance of priorities against current data trends and other community priorities, such as those outlined in Local Outcomes Improvement Plans.
- 2.93 The results of the consultation were analysed at local level with each Local Senior Officer producing a Local Plan Review Report. Some respondents made suggestions around local resources and specific incident response types and these have been considered and are either captured locally or within national project work. Our Local Senior Officers have the responsibility to ensure the national fire and rescue service is delivered locally. They endeavour to reflect, and take account of, local views wherever possible. This is predominantly through the local Police, Fire and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee. From a national

perspective, every local authority area received responses to the engagement exercise, although some areas did receive more than others. Of those responses, 250 (25.7%) were from those who identified themselves as SFRS staff members and 284 as representing an organisation. The survey results indicate a high level of satisfaction with 737 (76%) respondents stating that they were very or quite satisfied with SFRS performance in local areas. When looking at our understanding of local needs, 658 (68%) were very or quite satisfied that local plans were reflective of these. 20% of respondents left a neutral response to this question. The majority of respondents, 431 (44%), felt that there had been no change in the quality of services delivered by SFRS during the last three years. Similarly, 421 (43%) felt that there have been no changes to the innovations used to improve service provision and outcomes. When asked about communications, 395 (40%) respondents were satisfied with the level of information they receive about local fire and rescue activity and development. 337 (35%) respondents provided a neutral response and 241 (25%) stated that they were dissatisfied with our service in this area.

- 2.94 Our review of Local Plans, which has included an engagement survey, the results of a local scrutiny review and a look at performance data, led us to the conclusion that our Local Plans remain fit for purpose. From a stakeholder perspective, the survey results indicate a high level of satisfaction with 76% of respondents stating that they were very or quite satisfied with SFRS performance in local areas. 68% were very or quite satisfied that local plans were reflective of local need, with a further 20% of respondents leaving a neutral response to this question. The Local Scrutiny Review suggested that, overall, a very positive and consistent picture has been given over seven years of local scrutiny arrangements being in place. Following this review of the process and how it is functioning, the consensus is that it is performing as intended both from an Elected Members, Convener and LSO perspective. There is evidence that there is a clear link between the Local Fire and Rescue Plan priorities and their contribution to other community based plans, ensuring the best outcomes for communities. Additionally, the performance reporting of the Plan and the level of detail the Service provide overall has been positively received. There is, however, room for improvement and the suggestion that a greater focus on risk and outcomes would be beneficial within our Scrutiny reports as opposed to simply benchmarking against personal targets. Finally, the performance data section indicate that our Local Plans priorities are focused on those areas of need across Scotland. There is clear synergy between national and local priorities and need, as well as examples of how local partnerships can drive improvement and be shared across the Service as best practice.
- 2.95 A refresh of the Fire Framework is scheduled to take place 2021/22. This work will also instigate the need to revise the Strategic Plan 2019-22. Following this re-publication, Local Plans will then require a full review and update.

## **2.96 COMMAND AND CONTROL FUTURES (CCF)**

Work continues to progress the implementation of our new Command and Control Mobilising System which will enable integration of all three SFRS Operations Controls (OCs). The system will deploy bespoke technology that will significantly enhance both community and firefighter safety.

- 2.97 While the COVID-19 pandemic has had an adverse impact on the timeline for implementation and is clearly out with the control of the Service, the project team has continued to drive the programme forward, taking a proactive approach to minimise delays as much as possible. Working with French contractor Systel, we have adapted plans and increased resources on this major programme of work to have the new system in place in all three OCs by March 2022. Despite the challenges of the last 12 months, considerable progress continues to be made including establishing accreditation for the Airwave Code of Connection and in conducting staff training. User-testing is also now well underway.

- 2.98 Progress through the testing phase has been slow and hampered significantly by: the delayed provision of a “Go live” version of the software by Systel; the time taken for Systel to establish connectivity with the main communication bearer (Airwave); and the number of defects being identified because of a comprehensive and robust testing regime. ACO Dickie, as the SFRS Senior Responsible Officer, the CCF Project Board and all relevant SFRS Subject Matter Advisors continue to explore, develop and implement ways to ensure all legal, financial and contractual responsibilities are completed by Systel as the system provider.
- 2.99 A revised timeline for implementation has recently been established, based on minimising risk and delay to the new go-live dates, which are as follows:
- Dundee Operations Control – September/October 2021
  - Edinburgh Operations Control – October 2021
  - Johnstone Operations Control – January 2022.

## **2.100 CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES 26 (COP26)**

We are currently planning for the delayed UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) event to take place in Glasgow in November 2021, co-ordinated through the UK government. To contribute to this major multi-agency event, we will require additional one-off funding during 2021/22, currently estimated at £4.2million. The Service is a key player in supporting the safety and security of this event and the COP26 Event Planning Team are heavily embedded in multi-agency planning fora at all levels. There are a number of concurrent risks associated with COP26, not least the ability of the Service to provide part of a multi-agency response to a mass casualty event with trained and equipped SFRS operational personnel. The issues that the Service is having with the Fire Brigades Union in this respect is discussed elsewhere in this report.

## **2.101 EMERGENCY SERVICES MOBILE COMMUNICATION PROGRAMME (ESMCP)**

The Service, along with the Scottish Government and blue light partners, are a key player in the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP), which will deliver the new Emergency Services Network (ESN) across Great Britain. Despite previous delays, it is currently anticipated that implementation in Scotland will commence mid-2024. Significant planning will be required during the financial year 2021/22 to enable SFRS to play its part in the national roll out. Additionally, one-off funding for non-core costs will be required for the planning and implementation period. For 2021/22, this is currently estimated at £2.6million, rising to £5.3million in 2022/23.

## **2.102 LEARNING LESSONS**

### **2.103 GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART**

On 15 June 2018, more than 120 firefighters worked to contain and then extinguish a blaze that took hold of the Mackintosh Building at the Glasgow School of Art (GSoA). This is a complex and thorough investigation which remains ongoing. The damage to The Mackintosh Building was far greater than the fire incident in 2014. The structural stability initially delayed the physical excavation part of the investigation. SFRS chaired 10 multi-agency meetings with key partners including Police Scotland and the Health and Safety Executive.

- 2.104 Since Reigart (a specialist demolition contractor appointed by the GSoA) came on-site in July 2018 we have worked closely with them in the inspection and removal of several hundred tonnes of debris over 4/5 storeys of the building. The speed of our investigation has been governed by gaining access to the various sections of the building. The debris has been carefully removed in sections or layers to avoid destruction of

evidence and our investigators have then gone in to the areas opened up; specialist excavation equipment has on occasion been sourced to carry out certain tasks; steelwork has twisted or melted into a tangle and in the basement, ash and water from weathering and rain has produced a solid concrete-like compound which requires to be broken. Reigart have now completed an estimated 85% of their work. As the investigation progresses, we have added to the evidence and findings which will inform the report. Work also included the review and analysis of hundreds of hours of CCTV footage and captured witness statements. We are working to establish the origin and cause based on what remains within the building. Any potential evidence is likely to be limited due to the severity of the fire and items recovered are severely damaged.

- 2.105 On-site investigations and excavations were temporarily suspended during the first lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Reigart have cautiously estimated that they may complete excavation work by August 2021; this is subject to any further issues which may be unearthed during the continuing work but, if the timescale is met we should be able to produce and circulate a draft report within, a month thereafter, i.e. by September/October 2021.

## **2.106 THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY**

We continue to support Scotland's transition to a net zero carbon economy, through partnership working and in leading by example through our high-profile assets in communities across the country. We are driving this agenda through our Climate Change Response Plan 2045. This document includes a wide range of hard-hitting targets and commitments to help drive down carbon emission in line with Scottish Government direction.

- 2.107 We published our first Carbon Management Plan (CMP) in January 2021. This is a five-year plan to run from 2020-2025 and will be the first stage in an ongoing 25-year carbon reduction program to 2045. This high-level structured plan will set an interim carbon reduction target to be met within the five-year plan period. Our CMP also details a suite of carbon reduction projects including: the installation of solar array panels at our Asset Resource Centres; low carbon heating at Wholetime Stations; and smart heating controls and loft insulation at Retained stations.
- 2.108 We are working with the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland and Scottish Enterprise on a project that will engage business in developing innovative solutions for the yet unresolved decarbonisation challenge of heavy fleet, driving both economic and environmental benefit. Our alternative ways of working during the pandemic have resulted in financial and carbon savings in relation to travel. While it is unlikely that sustained levels of reduction will be fully achievable post-pandemic, it has provided a clear benchmark against which to measure future activity and has provided a catalyst for longer term sustainable carbon reduction.









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