



**SCOTTISH**  
**FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Working together for a safer Scotland



**DRAFT LOCAL FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN  
ARGYLL & BUTE  
2017**

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## Introduction

Welcome to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Argyll & Bute. This plan has been developed to support the delivery of agreed local outcomes for Argyll & Bute's communities in conjunction with the national priorities contained within the SFRS Strategic Plan 2016 – 2019. With the ambition of working in partnership to improving community safety, enhancing the well-being of those living or resorting to Argyll & Bute whilst tackling issues of social inequality, this plan will set out our priorities in order to support this ambition.

The demands placed upon the SFRS to respond to a wide variety of incidents challenges us to ensure our personnel acquire and maintain a range of skills to enable our ability to respond to emergencies. Through the identification and the management of risks within the area we will continue to prepare for these responses, however we recognise on many occasions this demand can be reduced through effective engagement and intervention measures.

We recognise as a public service organisation and as a member of the community planning partnership, the demographics of our society is changing which will challenge us to continually improve on how we deliver our services to our communities. Our plan will therefore seek prioritise areas of demand and work collaboratively with partner agencies to improve outcomes for local communities. By using our joint capacity more effectively and innovatively we will ensure we direct our resources to the point of need within our communities to protect those most at risk from harm.

As the SFRS continues to evolve we will seek to play a key part in public service reform and identify new opportunities to broaden our role within society to ensure as a modern Fire and Rescue Service, we continue to protect Argyll & Bute communities. This Local Fire and Rescue Plan in conjunction with the statutory responsibilities placed upon the SFRS will be used as a driver to build upon our existing partnership arrangements in Argyll & Bute whilst seeking to foster new relationships to support the service's mission of "Working Together for a Safer Scotland".

**James Hymas**  
**Local Senior Officer**

## National Context

Scottish Ministers set out their specific expectations for the SFRS in the Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2016. This provides the outline we should follow to ensure our resources and activities are aligned with the Scottish Government's Purpose and national outcomes.

Our Strategic Plan 2016-19 has been designed to meet these national expectations. Set against a complex and evolving backdrop our Strategic Plan encapsulates our mission, values and strategic priorities.

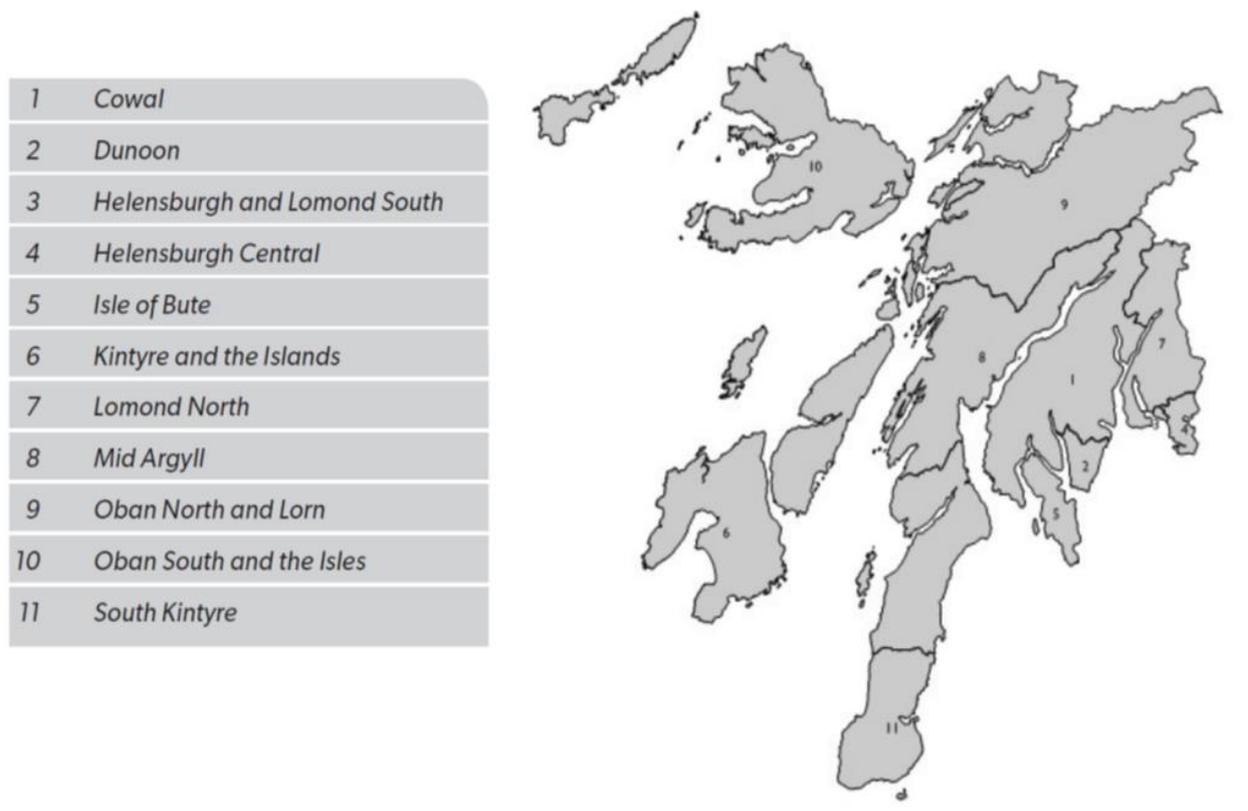


These have been shaped with due regard to the challenges we face and to what we need to achieve to be a highly effective, sustainable public service. Operating within a climate of significant public service reform means we need to transform how we operate. This will include how we prepare for and respond to changing societal needs, the impact of climate change and the threat of terrorism.

Strong leadership, supported by sound governance and management arrangements are at the very core of our foundations. These arrangements will direct and provide assurance that we comply with our statutory responsibilities. In addition, they will provide Local Senior Officers with supporting mechanisms to deliver services specifically tailored to local needs.

## Local Context

The current population of Argyll & Bute, which is around 87,000 and constitutes 1.6% of the total number of persons living in Scotland, is predicted to decrease at a time when Scotland's population is predicted to increase by 2030. Whilst the population within Argyll & Bute may decrease, the demographical aspect of the area suggests a projected increase in elderly residents by 10% for persons of pensionable age.



To enable the SFRS to plan and deliver on a proactive and reactive basis, it is important to understand where and how demand for fire and rescue resources may arise in the short, medium and longer term. As a local authority area, Argyll & Bute is constituted by eleven multi-member electoral wards covering a range of diverse urban and rural communities over approximately 2,668 square miles. Emergency response within the local authority area is provided from thirty nine (39) locations comprising of two wholtime station (permanently crewed) and 37 stations which operate on an 'On Call' basis.

Review of operational activity across Argyll & Bute indicates a general downward trend in overall activity levels over the last five years. In terms of fire related activity, accidental dwelling fires have remained fairly static however the current trend is showing a decrease. The continued targeting of our most at risk from unintentional harm and an increase in Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) has led to this decrease. The provision of early warning has contributed significantly to reducing the severity of fires within the home with the majority of incidents being dealt with in their initial stages. We will continue to work with our partners within Argyll & Bute to improve the safety of communities.

Fire fatality rates within Argyll & Bute for the previous five year period are extremely low, although fire casualty rates have remained static over the corresponding periods with a small downward trend in the current year. Although a positive continuous downward trend is not indicative at this time, the majority of recorded fire casualties are not required to attend hospital. Of those who have attended hospital, the majority have been deemed to have sustained only very slight injuries.

Deliberate fire setting on average accounts for just 1 in 20 operational responses and trend analysis indicates a reduction in levels of this activity type over the last five years. Analysis identifies deliberate fire setting is occurring on an ongoing basis, although peak activity has been identified in the same periods each year.

Whilst attendances at non-fire related emergencies on average account for around 1 in every 7 operational mobilisations and are considerably less than the number of fire related incidents, the number of fatalities and casualties are notably higher than fire related injuries (fatal and non-fatal). Moreover the majority of non-fire emergency casualties (fatal and non-fatal) are as a result of road traffic collisions within Argyll & Bute. Another emerging trend has been identified in those persons requiring assistance from other organisations, which results in support being requested from the SFRS in the form of forcing entry into premises to render assistance to occupants or the provision of first responder (medical) assistance.

Whilst many incidents within Argyll & Bute are as a result of a confirmed genuine emergency, on average more than half of emergency responses made by the SFRS turn out to be false alarms. These alarms may be as a result of a genuine belief that a fire is occurring which subsequently is confirmed not to be the case or through malicious activity resulting in a report of fire being made knowing this report is false in its nature. There are also a number of warnings of fire generated by fire alarm systems which, following an attendance and investigation, turn out to be false in their origin. Currently attendances to premises which generate these false signals account on average for half of all emergency responses within Argyll & Bute resulting in disruption to those within the premises in which the alarm activates and also to the SFRS who, on many occasions, are diverted from other activities to attend these incidents.

Reducing service demand, whilst developing the role of the SFRS as part of the ongoing process of public service reform, presents both challenges and opportunities for us to become more integrated in the community planning partnership environment. The recent introduction of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 will result in the development of Argyll & Bute's Local Outcome Improvement Plan through a process of locality planning which is designed to deliver local outcomes that make a positive contribution across Argyll & Bute's communities and to reduce inequalities. In developing this Local Fire and Rescue Plan, the SFRS will seek to ensure its activities compliment and support the locality planning process. With the development of the local community justice strategy within Argyll & Bute following the introduction of the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016, the SFRS will ensure, as a partner within the Community Justice Authority, its resources contribute to support the delivery of the local justice strategy.

The delivery of shared outcomes is embedded within Argyll & Bute through its range of community planning approaches. Argyll & Bute's Community Planning Partnership is committed to the delivery of its vision of being *“a place with strong, safe and vibrant communities where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high quality services which are sustainable, accessible and meet people's needs.”*

Through the development of its Community Plan and associated key strategic priorities focused on Economy and Skills, Safer Communities and Wellbeing, the SFRS takes an active role in the delivery of these priorities and their intended outcomes through participation and engagement across the partnership arena. Supporting the delivery of Anti-Social Behaviour, Adult and Child Protection, Health and Social Care including Alcohol and Drug strategies are examples of where the SFRS can collaborate in the delivery of these priorities at a local level whilst pursuing the key priorities of this Local Fire and Rescue Plan.

Overseeing the performance of the SFRS at local level is the responsibility of Argyll & Bute's Policy, Review & Scrutiny Committee. Within this forum the Committee undertakes the process of scrutiny to monitor progress against the priorities within Argyll & Bute's Local Fire and Rescue Plan and also engages with the Local Senior Officer in matters arising on a regional or national basis.



*Young FireFighters unit based at Campbeltown Community Fire Station.*

## Local Priorities

### 1. Domestic Fire Safety

Fire safety within the home is a key prevention strategy for the SFRS as the consequence of fires within the home can result in a range of impacts on individuals, families, social landlords and communities. For organisations the requirement to respond, intervene and deal with the aftermath of domestic fires places demand on its resources. To reduce this demand, it is essential that approaches to prevention are evidenced based in order to maximise and focus resources to make the biggest impact to safeguard those most at risk of fire.

Analysis of accidental dwelling fire data identifies cooking as the most common cause of fires within the home in Argyll & Bute and also the most prevalent cause where fire related injuries are sustained by occupants. Falling asleep & distraction have been identified as the main contributory factors where accidental dwelling fires and/or injuries occur. Those who are deemed at risk from fire may also have other vulnerabilities and impairments due to age, health or mobility reasons and they may also be receiving support from other partners. The scope therefore exists to work more closely together to protect those most at risk from fire through effective information sharing.

In order to reduce the potential for fires from occurring, influencing positive change in occupant behaviours through raising fire safety awareness will be at the forefront of our preventative activities. By increasing the ownership of working smoke detection, the means of giving early warning of fire will also contribute to mitigating the severity of fires and fire related injuries within the home. By using assistive technology such as 'Telecare', the opportunity exists to further enhance the safety of those who are at risk from fire.

**We will seek to reduce accidental dwelling fires and fire related injuries within the home by:**

- *Promoting and undertaking Home Fire Safety Visits to those deemed at risk from fire*
- *Working with our partners in Argyll & Bute to share information where fire risks within the home have been identified and to provide solutions to protect those who are at risk*
- *Focusing engagement activities in those areas where service demand has been identified*
- *Supporting the provision of assistive technology within the home to increase occupant safety*

**We will monitor our progress in promoting our domestic safety strategy by:**

- *Reviewing the number of accidental dwelling fires and their severity*
- *Reviewing the number and the severity of fatal and non-fatal fire related injuries*
- *Increasing the presence of working smoke/heat detection within homes affected by fire*

**By achieving a reduction in the frequency and severity of accidental dwelling fires and fire related injuries we will:**

- *Support the safety and well-being of Argyll & Bute residents*
- *Support the independent living of vulnerable members within our communities*
- *Reduce the social and economic cost of fires and fire related injuries*
- *Reduce demand on the SFRS and its partners*

## 2. Unintentional Harm and Injury

It is not uncommon for those at risk from fire to also be at risk from other injuries within the home, in particular from injuries arising from slips, trips and falls. Requests to the SFRS to provide assistance directly through a first responder role or to provide support to other agencies are increasing. Analysis of data indicates falls are a common cause of accidental deaths and injuries and account for a significant proportion of admissions to hospital. Those persons injured through falls may often be affected by other medical conditions such as dementia. The SFRS has a role to play in contributing to the protection of those at risk from injury and harm within the home. Through operational attendances and delivery of home fire safety visits, we have the opportunity to identify those at risk and through an assessment of such risk, refer individuals to partner organisations for additional support.

Out with the domestic environment, the SFRS respond to a range of non-fire related emergencies. The most common incident of this type within Argyll & Bute is attendances at Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) which results in the majority of non-fire related injuries. Responding to RTCs is a statutory duty for the SFRS, however a collective approach is required amongst community planning partners to support risk reduction measures. As a partner, the SFRS will support the education of young drivers who are considered to be an 'at risk' group and support other initiatives intended to reduce the instances and impact of RTCs within Argyll & Bute.



*Biker Down Initiative.*

**We will seek to reduce the impact of unintentional injury and harm by:**

- *Utilising our Home Fire Safety Visit programme to assess for non-fire related risk and refer those deemed at risk from injury and harm to partners to provide additional support*
- *Raising awareness of fire and rescue service personnel as to those factors that increase the risk of unintentional injury or harm*
- *Working in partnership to deliver targeted road safety programmes to young drivers*
- *Focusing resources where demand has been identified and deliver key safety messages*

**We will monitor the effectiveness of our intervention strategies by:**

- *Reviewing the number of requests for assistance from other agencies and for the provision of medical and first responder support*
- *Reviewing the number of attendances at RTCs and the frequency and severity of injuries arising from RTCs*
- *Reviewing the number of other non-fire related emergencies and the frequency and severity of injuries arising from these incidents*

**By achieving a reduction in the frequency and severity of unintentional harm and injuries we will:**

- *Reduce the social and economic cost of unintentional harm and injury*
- *Support vulnerable members within our communities to live independently within their communities*
- *Ensure the safety and well-being of those living, working and visiting Argyll & Bute*

### **3. Deliberate Fire Setting**

Deliberate fire setting accounts for 5% of all operational incidents within Argyll & Bute and takes various forms. Whilst a small proportion involves occupied buildings, vehicles and outdoor structures (primary fires), the majority of deliberate fires are classed as secondary in nature and on most occasions occur in outdoor locations.

Analysis of incident data identifies deliberate secondary fires occurring throughout the year, however peak activity is noted in the spring time, during the bonfire season and when prolonged periods of dry weather arise. Deliberate fire setting is regarded as anti-social behaviour and is also criminal in nature. These acts can lead to serious consequences such as personal injury, damage to property and the environment. Dealing with instances of deliberate fire setting also diverts fire and rescue resources from other meaningful activities.

Working in partnership, we will seek to combine our information to identify those parts of our communities that are being affected by anti-social behaviour in order to reduce such instances whilst tackling the underlying causes of such behaviour. On some occasions the SFRS will work with Police Scotland to investigate deliberate fire setting to determine the cause and if possible those responsible for such acts. Diversionary and engagement activity is regarded as an important approach in tackling anti-social behaviour and will continue to be part of our approach to raise awareness of the impact of this unwanted activity.

#### **We will seek to reduce the instances of fire related anti-social behaviour by:**

- *Identifying those parts of Argyll & Bute's communities affected by deliberate fire setting to share this information with our partners*
- *Utilising our Young Firefighters, Fire Reach, Firesetters and school's education programmes to raise awareness of the impact of fire related anti-social behaviour*
- *Working with partners to develop joint strategies to reduce the risk posed by deliberate fire setting and to mitigate its impacts*

#### **We will monitor the effectiveness of reducing fire related anti-social behaviour by:**

- *Reviewing the number and type of deliberate fire setting incidents within Argyll & Bute*
- *Evaluating the effectiveness of our youth engagement programmes*

#### **By achieving a reduction in fire related anti-social behaviour we will:**

- *Enable the SFRS to divert its resources towards other community based activities*
- *Protect the natural and built environments*
- *Support the promotion of active and responsible citizenship across Argyll & Bute communities*
- *Support our communities in feeling safe from crime, disorder and danger*

#### **4. Non-Domestic Fire Safety**

In general, all workplaces and business are classed as non-domestic premises and as such come within the scope of Part 3 of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 (the Act) which places duties on persons responsible for these premises to comply with the Act and its associated regulations. The SFRS has a statutory duty to promote fire safety and where required enforce compliance with fire safety legislation. To discharge this duty and to secure compliance, the SFRS has adopted an approach utilising advice, education and where required formal enforcement powers.

Given the variety of premises which come within the scope of the Act, the SFRS has developed a fire safety enforcement framework which is based on the principal of risk combined with historical fire data across occupancy groups to create the fire safety audit programme. Those premises which present a higher degree of risk from fire are subject to regular fire safety audits to verify compliance.

The impact of fire can have a devastating impact on business, employment, the provision of critical services and also our heritage. Evidence suggests that premises affected by a serious fire experience a high failure rate. The SFRS will undertake its audit programme to support Argyll & Bute's ambition to grow its economy during this challenging period of economic recovery and seek to safeguard its culture, heritage and continuation of employment opportunities.

##### **We will seek to reduce the instances of fires within non-domestic property by:**

- *Undertaking our fire safety audit programme in accordance with the SFRS Enforcement Framework*
- *Engaging with duty holders to promote responsible fire safety management of premises that come under the auspices of Part 3 of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005*
- *Working in partnership to ensure the appropriate provision of fire safety standards are incorporated in new premises under construction or premises undergoing material changes*
- *Working in partnership with other enforcement agencies and organisations to support legislative compliance*

##### **We will monitor the effectiveness of reducing fires in non-domestic premises by:**

- *Reviewing the number of fires in non-domestic premises and the type of premises involved in fire*
- *Reviewing the number and types of fire safety audits carried out across Argyll & Bute*
- *Reviewing the outcome of fire safety audits carried out in non-domestic premises*

##### **By achieving a reduction in fires within non-domestic premises we will:**

- *Enable the industrial, commercial and service sector to maintain business continuity and employment across Argyll & Bute*
- *Reduce the potential for loss of life and injury*
- *Protect Argyll & Bute's culture and heritage*
- *Protect the natural and built environments and reduce the impact of fire on our communities*

## 5. Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals

Fire protection within premises can be viewed as a holistic approach for the purposes of safeguarding life and/or property by inhibiting, growth and spread of fire. The design and use of premises will influence the extent of the fire protection required to be incorporated within it. In developing a fire protection strategy for the various premises types and for that strategy to be successful, a key component is the provision of early warning of fire. The provision of early warning enables those within premises sufficient time for them to exit the building to a place of safety in the event of fire.

Whilst a small number of fire alarm signals generated are due to confirmed fire conditions being present, there are an even greater number of signals generated which when investigated have occurred when no fire conditions have been present. On such occasions these are known as 'Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals' (UFAS) which is defined as '*an event which has required an operational attendance by the fire and rescue service due to the unwanted actuation of a fire alarm system*'. On these instances the signal may originate from a monitoring/call centre as a result of an automatic activation of the fire alarm system or a person activating the fire alarm system either maliciously or with good intentions believing a fire was occurring within a non-domestic premises.

The impact of responding to UFAS incidents causes disruption to the premises working environment and to the range of activities the SFRS undertake. Unnecessary blue light journeys also create additional risks and hazards to firefighters and to the public whilst responding to UFAS incidents and also have a detrimental impact on the environment through additional carbon emissions. Active and positive engagement with occupiers to take responsibility in limiting the number of UFAS incidents within their premises is integral to reducing these impacts.

### **We will seek to reduce the instances of Unwanted Fire Alarms Signals by:**

- *Investigating every cause of alarm and engaging with those responsible for fire warning systems following an operational attendance at a UFAS incident*
- *Analysing our UFAS attendances at those premises that give cause to frequent generation of false alarms to identify trends and support occupiers to develop demand reduction plans*
- *Instigating where required, formal fire safety enforcement measures to ensure appropriate demand reduction action is taken by those responsible for premises generating unacceptable levels of false alarms*

### **We will monitor the effectiveness of mobilising to Unwanted Fire Alarms Signals by:**

- *Reviewing the number of attendances at non-domestic premises and the type of premises generating unwanted false alarm signals across Argyll & Bute*
- *Evaluating the outcomes of occupier's demand reduction plans to review progress and identify and share good practice*
- *Reviewing our attendances at UFAS incidents to ensure our attendances are based on an assessment of risk and demand*

### **By achieving a reduction in Unwanted Fire Alarms Signals we will:**

- *Minimise the disruption to business and service continuity across Argyll & Bute*
- *Increase the capacity of the fire and rescue service to carry out other activities*
- *Reduce the risk to firefighters and public whilst responding to UFAS incidents*

## **6. Operational Resilience and Preparedness**

The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Fire (Additional Function) (Scotland) Order 2005 defines the duties and responsibilities for the SFRS in relation to responding to emergencies. It is essential our firefighters possess the skills, knowledge and expertise to respond to incidents which, by their nature, can be varied in both their type and complexity.

It is important our firefighters understand the risks across their communities to ensure the level of risk is matched by an appropriate level of operational response. In gathering this knowledge, appropriate training can be carried out to safeguard firefighter safety and to ensure any such response results in an effective and efficient deployment of our resources.

Emergency response across Argyll & Bute includes firefighters operating within the Retained Duty System (RDS) or as Volunteers. Both RDS & Volunteer firefighters respond from their homes and/or primary work locations and are based on an 'On-Call' provision. Given the dynamic nature of this duty system and to support a balance between primary, personal and firefighting commitments, each RDS/Volunteer stations requires a sufficient number of personnel to ensure this vital resource is available when required.

There will also be occasions whereby the nature of an emergency will require a combined response by emergency services and other organisations to deal with such a major event. To ensure a co-ordinated response occurs, additional duties are placed upon the SFRS under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to prepare and be able to respond to deal with major emergencies. The scope of such preparations may include responding to adverse weather events, natural disasters, pandemics, chemical incidents or major transport incidents. The threat of terrorism also compels the SFRS to ensure it can also respond alongside other partner agencies should such an event occur.

As an emergency responder, the SFRS needs to ensure it has the capability and the capacity to plan, prepare and respond to major emergencies. Working in partnership at a local and national level, the multi-agency approach requires a joint approach to assess these risks in order to develop appropriate response plans. Following their development, these plans require to be tested to support a return to normality when a significant event and subsequent disruption arises.

We recognise the potential for the role of the SFRS to evolve which provides scope to further protect those members of our communities from harm in the event of an emergency. Assisting other agencies in emergency situations, such as responding to 'Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrests' is one example where resources can be combined to maximise the potential for positive outcomes for those requiring assistance. Out with emergency responses the opportunity also exists to promote and support community resilience to improve the survivability rates from cardiac arrests through active engagement and education across Argyll & Bute communities.



CPR Training at Council Headquarters

**We will seek to ensure operational response and preparedness within Argyll & Bute is maintained by:**

- *Identifying and assessing the risk to our communities through Operational Intelligence gathering*
- *Undertaking planned training events to support the acquisition and maintenance of skills to provide the capability to respond to emergency incidents*
- *Continuing with RDS/Volunteer firefighter recruitment campaigns to support operational responses across Argyll & Bute*
- *Reviewing our operational responses to incidents to ensure ongoing firefighter safety and to ensure the ongoing protection our communities from harm*
- *Working in partnership to plan, prepare and test our responses to major emergencies*
- *Supporting and promoting the reduction of harm from 'Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrests'*

## Review

To ensure this Local Fire and Rescue Plan remains flexible to emerging local or national priorities a review may be carried out at any time but will be reviewed at least once every three years. A review may also be carried out if the Scottish Minister directs it or if a new Strategic Plan is approved. Following a review, the Local Senior Officer may revise the Plan.

## Tell us what you think

This draft Local Fire and Rescue Plan sets out what our broad ambitions will be on behalf of the people of our area. It sets our local direction for the SFRS and it will determine the details contained in all our other plans for that period.

We would like you to tell us what you think of our plan. The formal consultation for this draft Local Fire and Rescue Plan opens on 10 April 2017 and will run until 3 July 2017. To ensure we review and manage all responses consistently you are invited to provide comment in our online survey. This can be accessed at [firescotland.citizenspace.com](http://firescotland.citizenspace.com). After the consultation is closed we will publish the results.

If you cannot access our online survey, or if you would like more information about the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in your area you can:

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