



Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

DRAFT STRATEGY

2025-2028

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CHIEF OFFICER'S FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the SFRS Strategy 2025-28. A document that clearly sets out our ambitions for the next three years and explains how we will meet them.

I am incredibly proud to lead this Service and of the wide-reaching work we deliver throughout Scotland. As well as providing an effective emergency response, we sit at the heart of communities and work with a wide range of partners to improve the social and economic outcomes for the people of Scotland through our prevention activity.

As we look to the future, I have an ambitious vision for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS). One which would see us deliver a sustainable, modern and technological advanced Fire and Rescue Service that is fit to meet the challenges of Scotland's future.

As Chief Officer, I have six immediate priorities which will be delivered through this Strategy:

- Public Service Reform
- Enhancing Prevention
- Firefighter Safety, Technology and Training
- Leadership and Culture
- Strategic Service Review Programme
- Digital, data and technology capabilities

I want the Service to be a leader for Public Service Reform, recognising our role in a whole system approach to addressing Scotland's challenges. One that continually adapts to be better; and builds on the prevention, preparedness and response progress that we have already made by continuing to develop our people, equipment, facilities and intervention services.



STUART STEVENS
SFRS Chief Officer

I believe we have the potential to do more for the people of Scotland, responding to a broader range of life critical incidents and in further developing our prevention activity. I want us to realise that potential. This means continuing to invest and advance, whilst delivering the best value for money we can.

I will prioritise the safety of our people, with a clear focus on training, professional standards, competence and continuous improvement. Our ability to pursue innovation, embracing new technologies and working practices will be key to our success.

As we move forward, the development of all our staff groups is critical. I will place a clear emphasis on leadership development, inclusion and talent development. I am committed to ensuring that we continue to build a positive culture in our Service that is welcoming and equitable for all. I want us to be an employer of choice for everyone. One that supports our people to always feel physically and mentally safe; and to work in a supportive environment that celebrates our differences and recognises the benefits those unique life experiences can bring to the whole.

There are changes we must make to ensure that our Service is fit for the challenges of Scotland's future. This will allow us to invest in areas such as training and prevention; while also addressing the issues

we face across our ageing estate. Our Strategic Service Review Programme, which will look at how we deliver our services will be a priority over the next three years and beyond.

Sustained investment in our systems will be critical in supporting change in how we work. I am committed to making better use of our digital, data and technology capabilities to drive efficiency and improve performance.

While we recognise the importance of change, we also need to maintain a strong and capable organisation to manage the risks of today as we evolve to meet the new risks of tomorrow. This SFRS Strategy 2025-28 provides a clear vision of how we want to achieve both. It shows where we want to be in three years. It shows how we want to build on the strong foundations we already have through our current daily activities, and it marks the first steps in an ongoing journey to be a leading, sustainable and modern fire and rescue service for Scotland.

DELIVERING A SUSTAINABLE SERVICE

SFRS has a proud history of serving communities and ensuring people and communities in Scotland are safe. We do this by:

- Responding to fires
- Promoting fire safety
- Developing and delivering our prevention activities
- Enforcing fire legislation
- Responding to road traffic collisions
- Responding to serious transport incidents
- Responding to serious flooding
- Undertaking inland water rescues
- Dealing with structural collapse of buildings
- Responding to chemical, biological and nuclear incidents
- Carrying out rescues at height
- Supporting other agencies

Our prevention, preparedness and response roles have developed over time. We want to build on this success as a modern, technologically enabled fire and rescue service that is ready to meet the needs of Scotland's communities.

Scotland is changing and we need to adapt with it to continue to keep communities safe. We respond to a wider range of incidents than ever before, and the nature of our country means that different parts of Scotland require different combinations of services from us. Put simply, this means we need to keep changing how we work.

We are seeing fewer house fires but more flooding and wildfire incidents. Some of our stations are in areas where heavy industry, shipyards or coal mines formerly existed but are no longer present. Furthermore, we have stations that are no longer fit for purpose and require significant investment to make them safer and more suitable for our people. We want to make sure we have the right resources, in the right place, at the right time to continue to provide the best service we can.

Providing the best service is not only about response. It is about understanding emerging risks and preventing an emergency incident or harm from happening in the first place. Scotland faces evolving risks such as an ageing population, increased vulnerabilities, impacts of social and economic inequality, and the impacts of climate change. We have a proven track record in delivering a wide range of prevention interventions. This pro-active approach helps to support people to make their homes and communities safer. We support Scotland's diverse communities and groups – from educating young people, to supporting adults and older people to live safely and independently. We also support the business community to remain safe and prosper by regulating businesses and workplaces. This helps to ensure that the places people work in, or visit, are safe from fire.

Since the formation of SFRS, we have continued to deliver an effective emergency and prevention service for the people of Scotland, whilst delivering an ambitious savings target set by the Scottish Government. These savings were delivered through a systematic efficiency programme which changed our structure, our estate, and our work processes to ensure that we were being run as effectively and efficiently as possible, while creating a more resilient organisation.

Despite making these savings and recent budget increases, we are still faced with significant and complex spending pressures. As an already lean Service, our ability to keep modernising is becoming more difficult.

SFRS remains ambitious for Scotland regardless of these challenges. But to realise our ambitions we require investment. That investment will enable us to change, adapt and evolve. Without it, our ability to keep evolving will be compromised.

We have set out our ambitious Strategic Service Review Programme (SSRP) which will enable us, with investment, to deliver the changes we need to make and to build a sustainable Service for the future. This will allow us to develop new services, adopt new technologies and safeguard communities and firefighters in the future.

A priority for the next three years, SSRP will focus on: providing firefighters with modern facilities, fleet and equipment to enhance community and firefighter safety; how and where we deliver our services from; and ensuring our corporate services are as efficient and effective as possible.

We know from our own experience that change brings challenges, but our track record gives us confidence in our ability to advance further. We are committed to working and consulting with our communities and partners to deliver the change the country needs of us.

PURPOSE OF OUR STRATEGY

This Strategy sets the direction for how we will evolve over the next three years and is an important step towards progressing our Long-Term Vision as a Service.

It provides a set of clear objectives that we will deliver for the people of Scotland.

Our Strategy supports the delivery of our Purpose, Mission and Vision.

OUR PURPOSE:

“To work in partnership with communities and with others in the public, private and third sectors, on prevention, protection and response, to improve the safety and wellbeing of people throughout Scotland.”
– Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2022

OUR MISSION:

“Working Together, for a Safer Scotland”

OUR VISION:

“To be a leading, sustainable, modern and technologically advanced fire and rescue service that is fit to meet the challenges of Scotland’s future.”

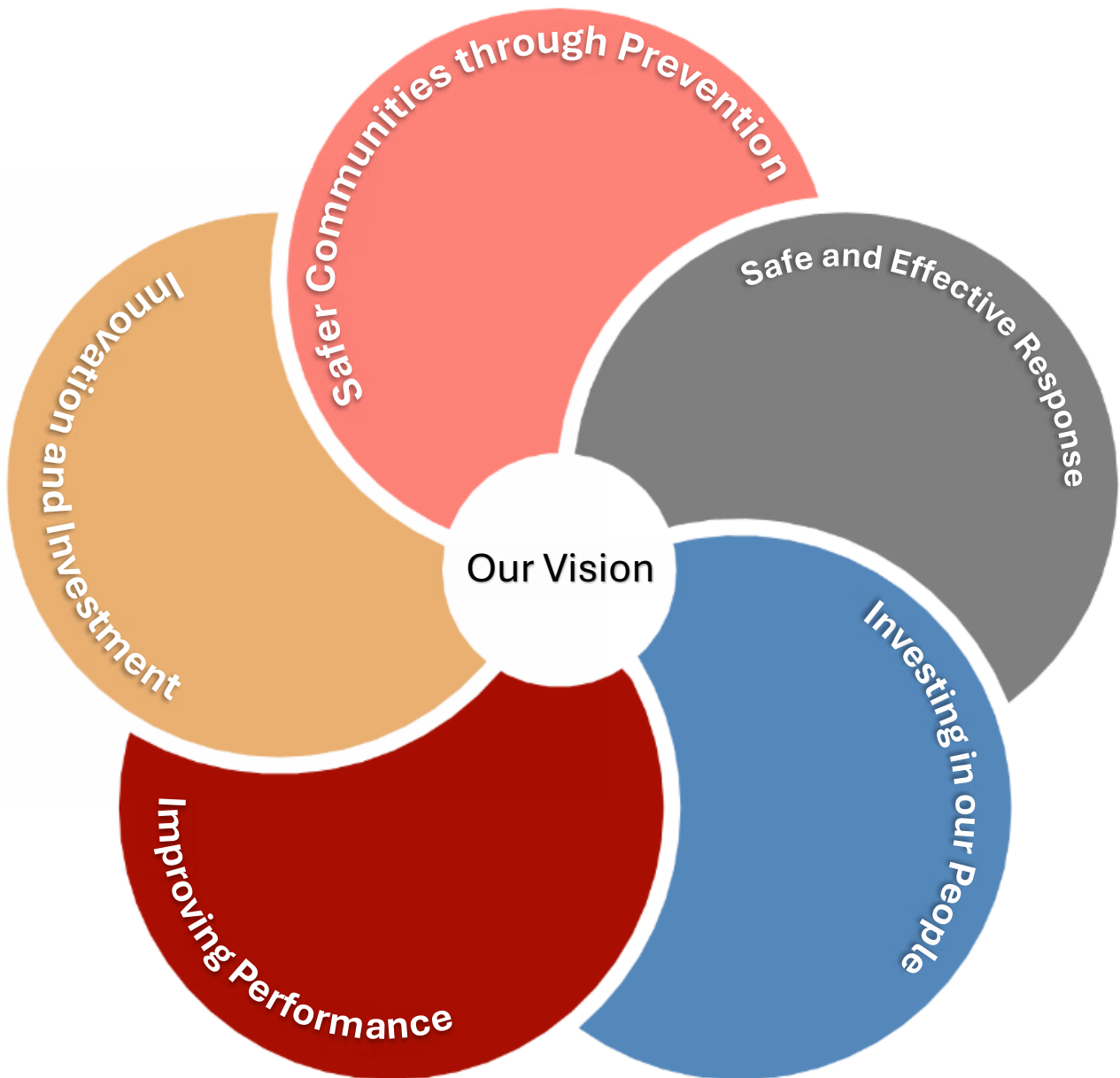
Our Purpose, Mission and Vision will be supported by our Values which provide a foundation for decision-making, behaviour and strategic direction:



OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

To achieve our ambitions, manage known Service risks, and deliver the Chief Officer's priorities, we have identified five strategic objectives for the Service.

Each objective holds equal value in driving our Strategy forward. As a collective, they define our overall direction and will be central to how we plan our activities and our budget over the next three years.



In the next section we have set out the outcomes we will pursue in meeting our objectives and what we will deliver to realise those outcomes.

OUR OBJECTIVES

Safer Communities through Prevention

Outcome: Through our work, in partnership with communities and other organisations, the safety and wellbeing of the people of Scotland continually improves.

What Safer Communities means for us:

We will always respond to emergency incidents, but it is better if they don't happen in the first place. We work to prevent fires in homes and businesses to reduce the devastating impact a serious incident can have. Working with a wide variety of partner organisations and communities also helps us to address existing and new wider safety concerns, including how we contribute to safeguarding vulnerable people. We are proud of this element of our work, and we want to do more - our Prevention, Protection and Preparedness Strategy will help us do this. We want to work even more closely with

communities, businesses and our Public Service partners to support Scottish Government's Public Service Reform ambitions. We want to build on our success of preventing harm, improving wellbeing and helping communities increase their resilience by working with local councils and a wide range of public and third sector partners. Critical to this is listening to and responding to communities' needs as we develop the services we provide. We want to remain a daily and trusted part of Scotland's communities and public service delivery system.

How we will deliver:

- Investment in new and enhanced data-led prevention interventions where their design is led by research and work with partners to achieve the impacts we wish to see.
- Our expertise will advise and influence the development of national policy areas, specifically those that include resilience, fire safety and prevention.
- Improved evaluation of our prevention interventions will enhance how we and our partners work to prevent harm.
- Our approach to fire prevention and enforcement will be revised through the implementation of findings from major incident reviews such as the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Reports.
- Preparedness will be increased to enable us to work alongside communities and our partners to build resilience to help us, and them, be better organised to meet the challenges of major incidents as well as enhancing day to day community safety.
- Continued commitment to Community Planning and partnership working, nationally and across all localities in Scotland, to improve community safety and wellbeing.

Safe and Effective Response

Outcome: We are a leading Fire and Rescue Service where our communities and people are safe.

What a good Fire and Rescue Service looks like:

Providing an effective emergency response will always be a priority for us. This is critical to reducing harm in our communities and keeping firefighters safe. To do this well and safely, it is important that we understand changing risks in Scotland. The impact of climate change will drive significant demands and pressures on to the Service as its effects are felt across Scotland's communities, in addition to changing social and economic risks. To meet the demands those risks generate we will adapt and develop our equipment, training, and the way we work to be as prepared for and effective as we possibly can be, whilst always

ensuring the safety of communities and firefighters. In our Operational Strategy (2022-32) we placed an effective operational response at the forefront of the Service. To do this, we will continue to learn and adapt from the incidents that we attend. We also acknowledged the importance of collaborating with partners and using the latest technology and techniques at the heart of our operational delivery across the country. Through our Training Vision and Strategy we will ensure that firefighters are suitably and competently trained to safely resolve operational incidents.

How we will deliver:

- Operational and control room firefighters will be equipped and receive high quality training in line with our Training Strategy 2024-29, ensuring they can safely and effectively respond to emergencies and maintain and develop their competencies.
- Fit for purpose workforce, technology, stations and vehicles that are located strategically to respond to community risk and need.
- New and different ways of working will be explored to maximise effective and productive worktime for our people.
- New operating delivery models to maximise organisational effectiveness.
- New systems and technologies to enable more effective and productive incident response capabilities.
- Organisational learning from operational incidents, training events and external event investigations will influence future practice, enhance performance and improve firefighter safety.

Investing in our People

Outcome: Our people feel valued and supported by SFRS in a culture that embraces diversity and inclusion, empowerment and accountability and drives joined up working.

What being a great employer means to us:

Our strength comes from our people. We are committed to creating a collaborative and supporting environment where everyone can excel and feel heard. We will put their safety, and their physical and mental health at the forefront of what we do. We will support them through change. We will develop and nurture their talent and skills, provide development opportunities for all, and offer rewarding careers. We will be

inclusive, with a culture that allows our people to be themselves at work. Our senior leaders will lead by example and show they are committed to our values through their behaviours, they and all staff will uphold those values in their daily work. We will take opportunities to build a workforce that better reflects the communities we serve and will promote diversity and inclusion at all levels of the Service.

How we will deliver:

- Our safety culture will put health, safety and wellbeing at the forefront across the Service.
- The mental health and wellbeing of our people will be protected, supported and improved.
- A culture that values and promotes inclusion, fairness, equality, respect and drives professional standards will continue to be embedded.
- Service Values will be reviewed so that they are reflective of a modern fire and rescue service and its people.
- Opportunities for our people to develop their skills and careers will be available.
- Our people will receive the leadership and management skills they need to match their role and enhance professional standards.
- New ways of working will help attract, retain and further support our workforce.
- Our workforce will increasingly reflect the population of Scotland where we employ individuals from a wide range of perspectives, communities, life experiences, characteristics, and heritage.
- Enhanced succession planning arrangements to ensure we always have a sustainable and skilled workforce will be in place.
- Strong and effective relationships will be maintained with our recognised Representative Bodies.

Improving Performance

Outcome: We will continuously improve our organisational performance, productivity and resilience.

What being and effective organisation means to us:

We strive to continually improve the services we provide to make Scotland safer. In challenging financial times, using innovative processes, technology and ideas will help us do this. As we adapt, it is important we have effective compliance, change and performance management processes in place. This will help us ensure we continue to deliver the best possible service and provide value

for money to the people of Scotland. We believe that effective governance, strong accountability, resilient performance and sound financial planning are at the heart of good public services. Our decision making will be evidence-led, open, and transparent. We will fully engage with our people and representative bodies as we continue to evolve and improve our services.

How we will deliver:

- Innovative ways of working will increase levels of productivity and performance, whilst providing value for money to the public.
- Change projects will be effectively managed, delivering on time, cost and quality whilst helping our people understand and commit to change.
- Organisational risk, security and resilience will be effectively managed to maintain business continuity during impactful events such as cyber security attacks.
- Continue to ensure the Service is well governed, providing information and assurance to the people of Scotland.
- Improved use of data and business intelligence across the Service will support decision making, manage activities, and enable us to work more productively.
- New and innovative ways of engaging with communities to inform and support our decision making.
- Building insights into public attitudes and levels of community satisfaction in what we do and how we work.

Innovation and Investment

Outcome: We are more innovative and achieve sustained investment in our technology, equipment, estate and fleet, making us more effective and efficient.

What innovation means to us:

New developments are happening at an increasing pace across every aspect of our society and economy. We want to do more for the communities of Scotland. We want to be a leader in how public services are delivered and this includes developing and diversifying our own role within communities. We believe that by working with our public service partners we could expand our activities, help save lives, minimise harm to people, and add social and economic value to Scotland. For example, we could provide an emergency medical response and support the most vulnerable in our communities. This could improve wider community outcomes, reduce demand of partner services and ultimately reduce the risk within Scotland's communities. As

we continue to evolve, it is important that our people have the right facilities, equipment and technology to do their jobs safely and well. Supported by our Strategic Asset Management Plans, we want our stations to be fit for a leading fire and rescue service, where our facilities reflect the needs of our workforce, improve our approach to reducing firefighters' exposure to contaminants, and are environmentally sound. Our people also need more technologically advanced equipment and vehicles to use at incidents; and to train with. Making better use of technology, embracing new ways of working to drive efficiency, innovation and automation will be a key feature in the next stages of our Service evolution.

How we will deliver:

- A diversified role within communities that increases our prevention and emergency response activities.
- Building an organisational environment that supports the research and development of innovative technology and working practices that improves public and firefighter safety.
- An improvement programme to deliver buildings that provide safe and appropriate facilities that reflect the needs of a modern workforce.
- Focus on identifying and reducing the risk of firefighter exposure to contaminants.
- Vehicles and equipment will continue to be modernised to support the safety and wellbeing of our people.
- Through investment in digital, data and technology capabilities we will support change in how we work.
- Review of Corporate Service functions will lead to better aligned, more efficient, effective and productive business processes.

DELIVERING OUR STRATEGY

The SFRS Strategy sets our national direction for the Service and shapes our approach to how we plan and deliver our services and in turn it will shape our local area plans. These plans are community focused and detail how national priorities will be delivered. They show how SFRS will support the delivery of the Local Outcome Improvement Plans, with local risk and need at the forefront.

Our Strategy will be delivered through our **SFRS Three-Year Delivery Plan**. This is a rolling planning document that details how we will deliver these priorities over the duration of the Strategy. It contains the most important activities that are required each year to deliver our ambitions. As it sets the direction for all other work plans, progress of the Three-Year Delivery Plan is closely scrutinised by the SFRS Board. Our delivery plan provides us with flexibility, allowing us to adapt our plans should unforeseen challenges arise. Any additions or changes must be approved by the Board. This ensures that the actions contained within it remain the top priorities for the Service.

From a corporate perspective, delivery of the SFRS Three Year Plan is supported by **Directorate Plans**. These go into further detail of the Directorate level work that will be carried out throughout the year. These Plans are scrutinised

by Directorate Management Teams; and form the basis of the work that is undertaken by individual teams through **Functional/Team Plans**.

From an operational perspective, delivery of the SFRS Strategy and Three Year Plan is supported by **Local Fire and Rescue Plans**. These plans are community focused and detail how national priorities will be delivered with local risk and need at the forefront. Progress against Local Fire and Rescue Plans is scrutinised by Local Management Teams and Local Authority Scrutiny Committees. Local Fire and Rescue Plans are supported by **Community Fire Station Plans**, showing how each station in that local authority area will contribute to the delivery of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan and ultimately help deliver this Strategy. This diagram shows how our planning process provides clear guidance at every level of the Service.



HOW WE WILL MEASURE AND EVALUATE OUR WORK

Progress against the objectives in this Strategy will be closely monitored and evaluated to ensure that we are effective in their delivery.

Internally we report our performance to Executive and Non-Executive Boards and Committees on a quarterly basis through our Three-Year Delivery Plan Update Reports and our Quarterly Performance Dashboards. These reports provide progress updates on our detailed delivery plans and targets.

As a public service body that is committed to transparent reporting, the same reports are widely available on the [SFRS website](#).

More details of our annual progress is also made available via our Annual Performance Review Reports, Annual Report and Accounts and our Official Statistics. We also have a range of qualitative performance reports which detail how we are working towards specific priorities within the Strategy. This includes publications like our SFRS Working in Partnership Report, Annual Procurement Report and Health and Safety Report – all of which can also be found on the [SFRS website](#).

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

The formal consultation of this draft SFRS Strategy 2025-28 opened on Wednesday 5 February 2025 and will run until Wednesday 2 April 2025. To ensure we review and manage all responses consistently please feed back to us using our online survey. This can be accessed on the [SFRS website](#). 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 you can:

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Version 1.0 February 2025