

**Working together
for a safer Scotland**



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
Working together for a safer Scotland

LOCAL FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN

2026 - 2029

Highland

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Safety. Teamwork. Respect. Innovation.

Foreword

As Chair of the Highland Communities and Place Committee, I am pleased to present the Highland Local Fire and Rescue Plan for 2026–2029. This Plan sets out the priorities that will guide the delivery of local fire and rescue services over the next three years and reflects our continued commitment to keeping people and communities across Highland safe.

Over the past year, Highland has experienced some of the most significant and challenging extreme weather events, including one of the largest wildfire incidents ever seen in the area, these incidents highlight the growing risks posed by changing environmental conditions, while also demonstrating the professionalism, dedication and resilience of firefighters and partner agencies working together in exceptionally difficult circumstances.

The challenges facing the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service continue to evolve, and the importance of prevention, preparedness and collaboration has never been greater. Alongside responding to emergencies, the Service plays a vital role in supporting vulnerable people, working with partners and helping communities reduce risk before incidents occur.

This Plan reflects a strong commitment to partnership working, early intervention and community engagement. By continuing to work closely with local organisations and communities across Highland, we can ensure resources are targeted where they are needed most and that services are well prepared to respond effectively to the risks and challenges that lie ahead.

I would like to thank the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, partner agencies and local communities for their ongoing dedication and support in helping to make Highland a safer and more resilient place to live, work and visit.

Councillor Graham Mackenzie

Chair of Communities and Place Committee

Highland Council

Introduction

As Local Senior Officer for Highland, I am pleased to present the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Highland 2026-2029.

This Plan places our communities at the heart of everything we do and sets out how we will work in partnership to deliver a professional, effective and community focussed service, improving local outcomes for the people of Highland.

This Plan has been developed to support delivery of the agreed outcomes of the [Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Strategy 2025-2028](#), the Highland Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP). It recognises the importance of collaboration with partners to respond to the diverse, shared and unique needs of communities across Highland, aligning our efforts to improve community safety and enhance the wellbeing and resilience of those who live, work in and visit Highland.

SFRS recognise that Scotland's demographics are changing, presenting greater challenges for public services. An ageing population, rising levels of vulnerability, social and economic inequality, and the impacts of climate change all influencing risk and demand.

Highland area presents unique challenges for delivering our service, with our expansive geography, rural depopulation, remoteness of our communities and the transient nature of the working population which provide our rural emergency response. We are committed to supporting and investing in our people to ensure workforce sustainability.

We are focussed on ensuring our operational readiness and resilience for the diverse and emerging nature of risks and incident types. This requires our personnel to maintain a broad range of skills and capabilities to deal with historical and emerging risks, including extreme weather events and those such as specialist wildfire response and water rescue incidents.

We will continue to use our capacity flexibly, effectively and innovatively and direct resources to where they are needed most to protect those most at risk from harm.

Prevention remains at the heart of our approach, and we shall continue our focus on early intervention and engagement, and ensuring our communities are as prepared for the emerging risks associated with new technologies and climate change, targeting our resources and education programmes based on risk to reduce incidents and harm. Our partnership working will continue to address the underlying social, health and economic factors that influence community safety and contribute to improve public health outcomes, safer living environments and increased community wellbeing and resilience.

By taking a preventative, partnership and place-based approach, we will continue to adapt how we deliver our services, ensuring we have safer communities, improved wellbeing and our shared ambition for the next three years and beyond to '**work together for a safer Scotland**'.



Area Commander Lynne Gow
Local Senior Officer
Highland

National Context and Challenges

Scottish Ministers set out their specific expectations for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) in the [Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2022](#). This Framework provides SFRS with seven strategic priorities and objectives, together with guidance on how the delivery of our functions should contribute to the Scottish Government's Purpose.

The Framework also defines the SFRS purpose as:

'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.'

The SFRS Strategy 2025-28 has been designed to have regard to these national expectations. Set against a complex and evolving backdrop, our Strategy supports delivery of our Purpose, Mission and Vision.

To achieve our ambitions, we have identified five strategic objectives and outcomes. 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.

OBJECTIVE	OUTCOME
Safer Communities through Prevention	Through our work with communities and other organisations, the safety and wellbeing of the people of Scotland improves.
Safe and Effective Response	We are an effective and trusted Fire and Rescue Service where our communities and people are safe.
Investing in our People	Our people feel valued and are supported by a culture that embraces diversity and inclusion, empowerment and accountability.
Improving Performance	Our organisational performance, productivity and resilience continually improve.
Innovation and Investment	We are more innovative and achieve sustained investment in our technology, equipment, estate and fleet, making us more effective and efficient.

This Plan is a statutory Local Fire and Rescue Plan. It sets local direction to meet the strategic objectives and outcomes outlined above; and supports delivery of the SFRS Prevention Strategy. It demonstrates how we will contribute to Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) within the Local Authority area.

National Challenges

Over the next three years, the SFRS will operate within a challenging and rapidly evolving national context. This Local Fire and Rescue Plan is developed against a backdrop of sustained financial pressure, changing community risk, and the need for organisational change to ensure services remain effective, sustainable and focused on prevention.

SFRS continues to face real-terms financial constraints despite funding uplifts, with rising costs, inflationary pressures and a substantial backlog in capital investment. Ageing fire stations, fleet and operational systems require modernisation, while the Service must also deliver recurring savings. This national financial environment directly shapes decisions about service delivery models, asset rationalisation and the prioritisation of resources at local level.

Workforce capacity remains a critical national challenge. Recruitment, retention and availability, particularly within the On Call duty system are under increasing pressure, especially in rural and remote communities. Supporting staff wellbeing, skills, training and leadership capacity is essential to maintaining safe and reliable emergency response while adapting to new and emerging risks.

The risk profile across Scotland is changing. While accidental dwelling fires continue to decline, demand is increasing from climate-related incidents such as flooding, wildfires and extreme weather events. These incidents are often prolonged, complex and resource-intensive, requiring increased resilience, specialist capability and effective multi-agency coordination. At the same time, demographic change, health inequalities and housing conditions continue to drive vulnerability and risk within communities.

Prevention remains at the core of SFRS's national and local approach. Reducing harm, protecting vulnerable people and building community resilience are central to managing demand and delivering long-term public value. This requires strong collaboration with partners across health, social care, local government and the third sector.

The SFRS Prevention Strategy 2025–2028 sets out a clear ambition to reduce harm, protect firefighters and communities, and manage demand through a universal prevention offer delivered proportionately according to risk, vulnerability and inequality. Local Fire and Rescue Plans are a key mechanism for delivering the Prevention Strategy at local level. They translate national prevention priorities into locally tailored actions, ensuring that community safety engagement, protection and preparedness activity is informed by local risk profiles, partnership intelligence and community need.

In response to some of the challenges we face, SFRS is progressing its Strategic Service Review Programme (SSRP). 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. These changes are necessary to ensure resources are targeted where risk is greatest, while maintaining public confidence and local accountability.

This Local Fire and Rescue Plan translates this national context into local priorities, reflecting the specific risks, needs and characteristics of communities. It sets out how SFRS will work with partners to deliver prevention, protection and response activities in a way that supports safer communities while contributing to the Service's wider strategic aims for Scotland.

By focusing on prevention, collaboration and early intervention, this Plan supports public service reform and delivers better outcomes for our local communities.

Local Context

Highland Context

Highland is the most northerly local authority area on the Scottish mainland, covering approximately one-third of Scotland's land mass. It borders Moray to the east, Perth and Kinross to the south, and Argyll and Bute to the south-west, while also encompassing the northern Inner Hebridean islands off the west coast.

The area contains some of the most remote and sparsely populated communities in the United Kingdom. Its landscape is highly diverse, ranging from the fertile farmland of the Black Isle and Cromarty Firth to the dramatic coastal scenery of the west and north.

Highland's mainland coastline extends for approximately 1,900 kilometres, representing almost half (49%) of Scotland's mainland coastline. The area is also home to some of the highest mountains in the British Isles and the Flow Country of Sutherland, which contains the largest expanse of blanket bog in Europe.

At 26,484 square kilometres, Highland is Scotland's largest local authority area. While it has the seventh-highest population among Scotland's 32 local authorities, with approximately 237,290 residents, it has the lowest population density, with around eight people per square kilometre. Highland is an area of outstanding natural beauty and contains a diverse mix of urban, rural, remote and island communities. The larger towns include Wick, Thurso, Tain, Invergordon, Alness, Dingwall, Nairn, Aviemore, Grantown-on-Spey, Fort William and Portree, while Inverness is the principal urban centre and accounts for approximately 34% of the Highland population. Beyond these settlements, many people live in rural communities, remote mainland locations and island environments, each presenting distinct risks and service delivery challenges.

The population is dispersed across a vast geographical area. While Inverness acts as the main service and economic centre, many smaller towns, villages and isolated communities are located significant distances from emergency and public services. This rurality and remoteness create challenges for emergency response, accessibility and service delivery, particularly in areas with limited transport infrastructure and longer travel times.

The demographic profile of Highland reflects both a growing and ageing population with a median age of 48, significantly higher than many other local authority areas. The area has a higher proportion of older people than the Scottish average with the 75+ population increasing by 78% in 25 years with many residents living alone or in remote locations. This can increase vulnerability and risk, particularly in relation to domestic fire safety, unintentional harm, health inequalities and access to support services.

Highland also experiences substantial seasonal population increases due to tourism, particularly along popular routes such as the North Coast 500 and in areas of significant natural and cultural interest. This creates additional and often unpredictable demand on local services and can increase risk, particularly in relation to Road Traffic Collisions, wildfires, water safety incidents and accidental fires associated with temporary accommodation, camping and outdoor recreation.

While Highland is often associated with affluence and quality of life, there are also communities that experience significant socio-economic disadvantage, fuel poverty and housing challenges. These factors can increase the risk of fire and other emergencies and may contribute to poorer health and wellbeing outcomes. Such inequalities are not confined to specific locations and can be found across both urban and rural communities, requiring a targeted, intelligence-led approach to prevention and protection activity.

Community Planning Partnerships (CPP)

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) is a statutory partner within Community Planning in Highland. We work collaboratively with partners across the 9 CPPs to deliver a whole systems approach to improved outcomes for our communities through the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP) and the Community Planning Partnership Board.

The HOIP is structured around three key strategic priorities:

- People – enabling individuals to live independently, safely and well
- Place – building sustainable and resilient communities through place based approaches
- Prosperity – supporting inclusive economic growth and opportunity.

Through the deployment of appropriate resources and targeted interventions, strengthening place-based working across Highland to ensure community focussed activity, SFRS will contribute to achieving the shared outcomes and priorities set out by the Highland CPP. SFRS in Highland will proactively support these priorities through the deployment of necessary resources to deliver the priorities of this Plan.

We are embedded within the Community Justice Partnership, Public Protection arrangements and a range of local partnership and locality planning groups. In addition to supporting preparedness and community resilience, SFRS is an active member of the Highlands and Islands Local Resilience Partnership.

Highland is served by 58 Community Fire stations:

- One full time, permanently crewed station in Inverness (also with an On Call crew)
- 52 On Call stations
- 6 Community Response Units (CRU).



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE SERVICE DELIVERY AREA NORTH

HIGHLAND

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KEY

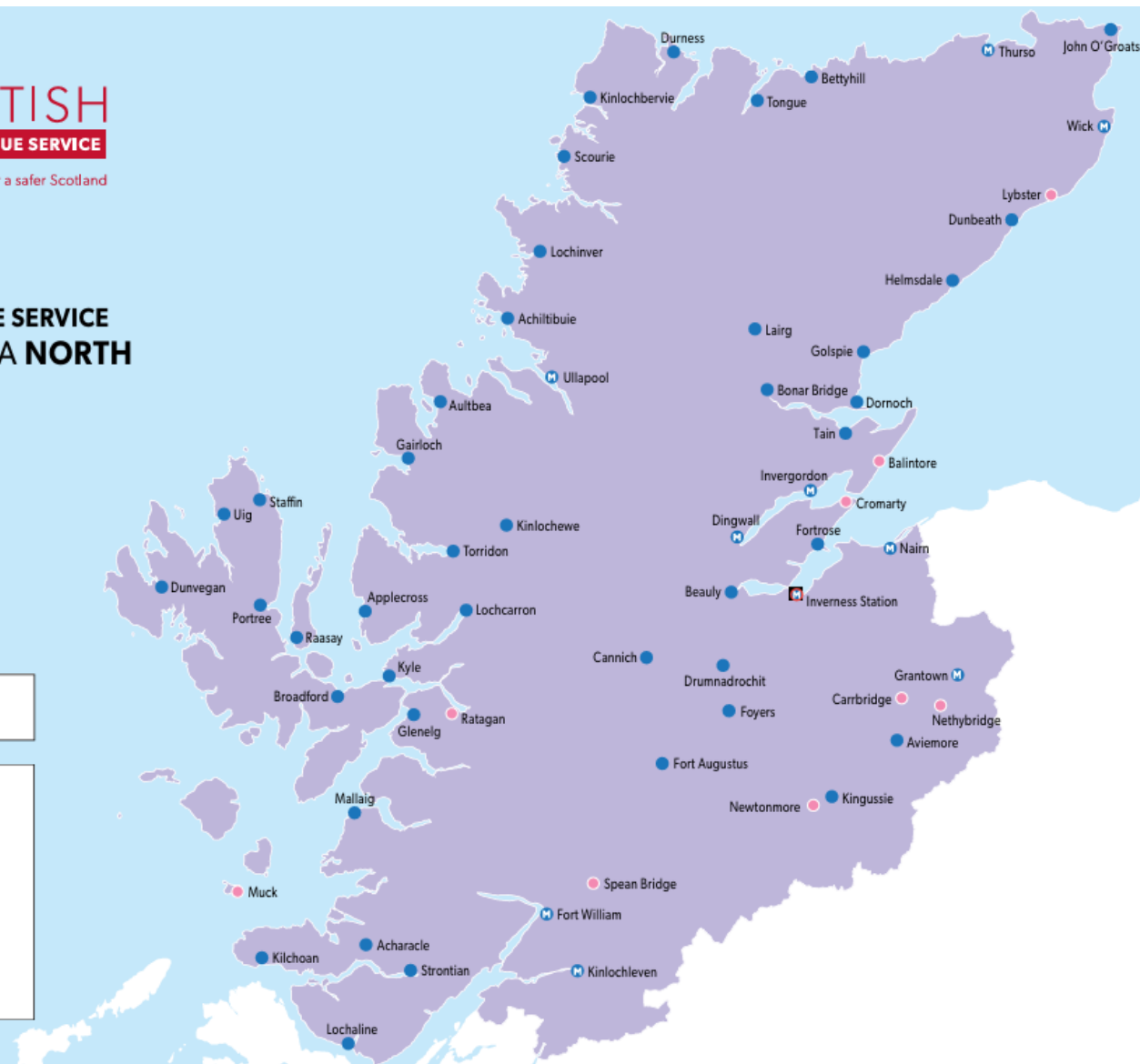
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Retained – On call

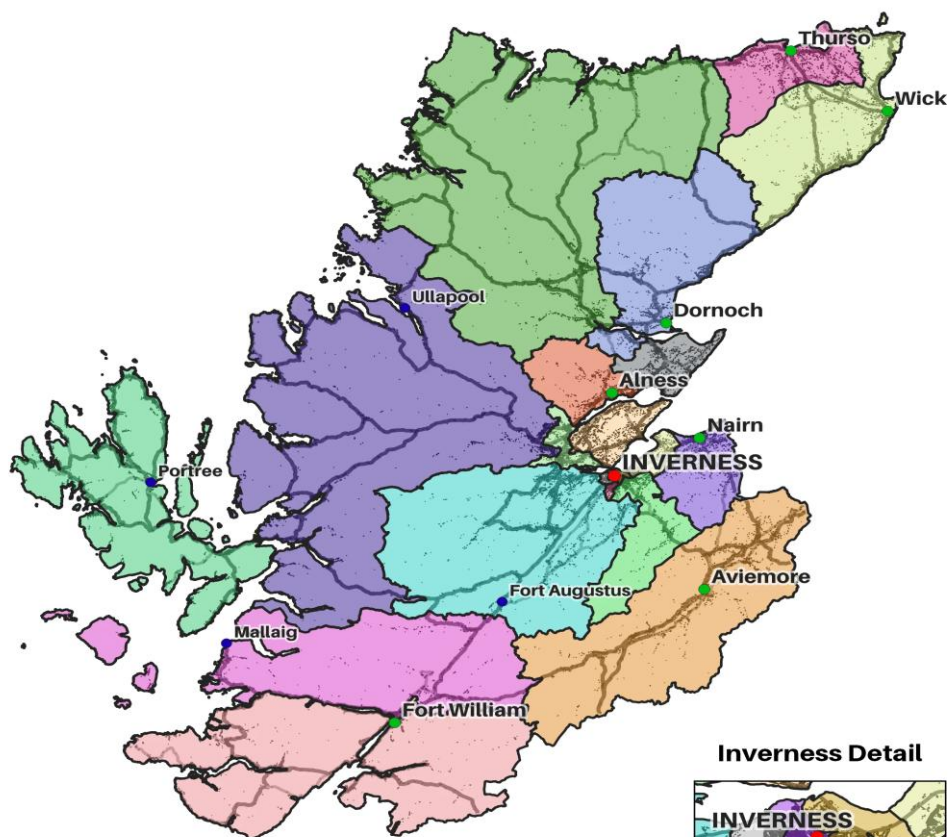
Community Response Unit

'M' on a station symbol denotes
a multi-pump station.

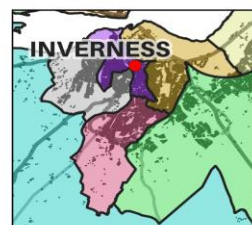


There are 21 Highland Council wards represented within 10 Local Area Committees in which SFRS management attend quarterly meetings, producing local scrutiny reports.

Highland Council - Current Ward Boundaries



Inverness Detail



- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. North, West and Central Sutherland (3) | 12. Aird and Loch Ness (4) |
| 2. Thurso and Northwest Caithness (4) | 13. Inverness West (3) |
| 3. Wick and East Caithness (4) | 14. Inverness Central (3) |
| 4. East Sutherland and Edderton (3) | 15. Inverness Ness-Side (3) |
| 5. Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh (4) | 16. Inverness Millburn (3) |
| 6. Cromarty Firth (4) | 17. Culloden and Ardersier (3) |
| 7. Tain and Easter Ross (3) | 18. Nairn and Cawdor (4) |
| 8. Dingwall and Seaforth (4) | 19. Inverness South (4) |
| 9. Black Isle (3) | 20. Badenoch and Strathspey (4) |
| 10. Eilean a'Cheo (4) | 21. Fort William and Ardnamurchan (4) |
| 11. Caol and Mallaig (3) | |

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Place Names and Buildings layers via Alasdair Rae (statmapsnpix.com)



References:

[Highland - National Records of Scotland \(NRS\)](#)

[Geography - Highland profile - key facts and figures - Highland Council](#)

Performance Scrutiny

The Highland Fire and Rescue Plan will be subject to robust governance and scrutiny arrangements through Highland Council's Communities and Place Committee. The Local Senior Officer (LSO), or nominated deputy, will provide six monthly performance updates to the Committee outlining progress against priorities, emerging risks, and key performance indicators in the following headings:

- Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADF)
- Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties
- Non-fire related casualties
- Deliberate Fires
- Non-Domestic Fires
- Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS)
- Road Traffic Collisions
- Home Fire Safety Visits
- Fire Enforcement Audits
- Community Safety and Engagement

These reports will include both qualitative and quantitative measures, benchmarking against previous years and national trends where appropriate. Scrutiny will further be supported through:

- Quarterly performance reports presented by local Station and Group Commanders to Local Area Committees;
- Annual Performance Reports;
- Continuous monitoring of operational activity, appliance availability and prevention and protection work.

Local Group and Station Managers will maintain engagement with elected members and community councils, communities and partners, ensuring local intelligence informs ongoing review and continuous improvement.

We report our performance to Boards and Committees of SFRS to ensure our progress against the objectives in the [SFRS Strategy 2025-2028](#). These reports are published on our website.

This approach ensures transparency, accountability and continuous improvement in delivering outcomes for the communities of Highland.

Local Priorities

The following priorities have been identified to support delivery of the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HIOP), particularly its focus on reducing inequalities, improving community safety and wellbeing, and strengthening community resilience through partnership working.

The priorities meet the requirements of our [SFRS Strategy 2025-2028](#) and have been identified through local risk analysis, operational incident data, and our national SFRS strategic direction to contribute to Safer Communities through Prevention.

Priority 1.	Safe and Effective Response
Priority 2.	Non-Fire Emergencies, Climate Change and Wildfire Risk
Priority 3.	Domestic Fire Safety and Unintentional Harm
Priority 4.	Deliberate Fire Setting
Priority 5.	Non-Domestic Fire Safety
Priority 6.	Reducing Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals
Priority 7.	Community Resilience

	SFRS Highland Local Area Plan Priorities						
HOIP Outcomes	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority 5	Priority 6	Priority 7
Outcome 1 Poverty Reduction			✓	✓	✓		✓
Outcome 2 Community Participation & Dialogue		✓	✓	✓			✓
Outcome 3 Infrastructure (Access, Transport, Digital Inclusion)	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Outcome 4 Community Safety & Resilience	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Outcome 5 Mental Health & Wellbeing		✓	✓	✓			✓

Local Priorities

1. Safe and Effective Response

Background:

The SFRS has a statutory duty to reduce the risks to our communities and to ensure that they receive the best possible service. It is essential that our firefighters possess the skills, knowledge and expertise to respond to incidents when called upon which can be varied in both their type and complexity.

The SFRS has a duty to prepare for and respond to 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.

Highland presents a complex risk profile; its large geographical area, challenging road network dispersed population and rural and remote communities present challenges for ensuring a consistent and effective emergency response. We must remain adaptable to ensure the right resources are available at the right time. Maintaining operational preparedness, resilience and firefighter competence is critical to ensuring safe and effective response. This must be supported by strong operational intelligence, robust crewing models and a clear understanding of current and emerging risk across the area.

We will achieve it by:

- Ensuring our staff are trained to the highest standards to deploy safely, using the latest technology and equipment to meet our current and future risks
- Ensuring all known local risk information is obtained, communicated and tested
- Working locally with partner organisations to ensure effective emergency response plans are developed for identified local risks including our own local business continuity plans
- Fulfilling our statutory duties of the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) by ensuring our effective participation in Highlands and Islands Local Resilience Partnerships (HILRP) and the associated Emergency Liaison Groups (ELG)
- Maintaining risk-based crewing and resource models
- Improving recruitment and optimising availability of the On Call duty system

Performance Indicators:

- % of personnel in currency against Training for Operational Competence Programme
- % of personnel in currency against National Training Standards
- Appliance Availability
- Station establishment and crewing confidence levels
- Response times to incidents
- Operational assurance and incident debrief outcomes

Local Prevention Activity:

Community Safety Engagement

- Operational intelligence visits and site-specific risk planning
- Business continuity planning and testing
- Multi-agency exercises
- Developing our Community Asset Register

Protection:

- Effective Fire Investigations undertaken to ensure essential learning is captured and cascaded to crews

Preparedness:

- Robust programme of hydrant planning maintenance and inspections
- Effective business continuity planning and testing
- Supporting communities to build resilience

Expected Outcomes:

- Safe and effective emergency response
- Reduced impact of emergencies on communities
- Enhanced community resilience during event adversity.

Delivering Against Strategic Objective:

- *Safer communities through Prevention*
- *Safe and effective Response*
- *Investing in our People*
- *Improving Performance*
- *Innovation and Investment*

2. Non-Fire Emergencies, Climate Change and Wildfire Risk

Background:

Non-fire emergency incidents, including Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs), water rescues, flooding and supporting partner agencies at medical emergencies, continue to increase across the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) and within Highland. These incidents are often complex, prolonged and resource intensive.

Highland's extensive geography, transport network and significant tourist population contribute to seasonal variations in demand. In addition, climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of severe weather events, creating a growing year-round challenge for emergency responders and requiring substantial SFRS intervention to protect communities and support recovery efforts.

In response, SFRS has implemented its Wildfire Strategy, strategically positioning specialist wildfire assets across Scotland, including dedicated resources in Highland. Specialist water rescue teams are also located within the area, providing an effective and coordinated response to water-related emergencies and enhancing public safety.

Demand for SFRS attendance at RTCs, flooding incidents, wildfires and severe weather events is expected to continue rising. As the impacts of climate change become more pronounced, the frequency, complexity and severity of these incidents are likely to increase, placing further demands on SFRS resources and response capabilities.

We will achieve it by:

- Working with partners to address wider risk factors affecting community safety and wellbeing
- Supporting the delivery of the SFRS Wildfire Strategy through prevention, preparedness and response activity
- Contributing to Highland Community Planning initiatives
- Contributing to resilience with the Highlands and Island Local Resilience Partnership
- Enhancing partnerships and utilisation of the Community Asset Register
- Using incident and partnership data to identify high-risk groups and locations
- Enhancing Operational intelligence information and work with partners to develop local response plans

Performance Indicators:

- Number of Road Traffic Collisions (RTC) attended by SFRS per year recorded against a 5-year comparison of operational activity
- Number of RTC related casualties (fatal and non-fatal) and causation recorded against a 5-year comparison of operational activity
- Number of non-fire casualties
- Number of water and flood related incidents
- Number of Assisting other agency incidents
- Number of Large Outdoor Fires (reported under priority 4)

Local Prevention Activity:

Community Safety Engagement:

- Road safety engagement (young and elderly drivers and “Biker Down” campaigns)
- Water safety campaigns (Partnership Approach to Water Safety (PAWS))
- Wildfire awareness and prevention activity

Preparedness:

- Flood and wildfire training and capability development
- Monitoring wildfire risk and issuing of Wildfire danger assessments
- Enhanced training in wildfire suppression techniques
- Development of the Community Asset Register

Expected Outcomes:

- Reduced harm from non-fire emergencies
- Improved preparedness for climate-related incidents
- Reduction in the number and consequences of harm from Road Traffic Collisions, water and climate-related incidents
- Increased community awareness and ability to respond to environmental risk
- Contribution to safer, more resilient communities.

Delivering Against Strategic Objective:

- *Safe and Effective Response*
- *Safer Communities through Prevention*
- *Investing in our People*
- *Improving Performance*
- *Innovation and Investment*

3. Domestic Fire Safety and Unintentional Harm

Background:

Although accidental dwelling fires have reduced nationally by 26% over the last 10 years, local analysis shows minor variation with no sustained downward trend. Despite ongoing prevention activity, cooking related fires remain the most common cause of accidental dwelling fires, consistently representing over 50% of incidents. Analysis shows that risk is often associated with factors such as age, health, social isolation and poverty. Highland's ageing population and rurality increase these vulnerabilities, particularly where individuals may have limited access to support services.

Many of those vulnerable to fire risk are known to partner agencies. There is a clear strategic need to strengthen referral pathways and improve data sharing. In response, a more targeted prevention approach will be prioritised in Highland, focussing on high-risk individuals.

Despite national reductions, reducing fire-related harm, especially fatalities and casualties, remains a priority. A targeted, partnership-led approach is required to identify those most at risk and provide early intervention and support.

We will achieve it by:

- Targeted Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs) focussing on high-risk behaviours (cooking, smoking, alcohol and drug use)
- Working with partners to refine and strengthening referral and data sharing pathways
- Train and support staff to fulfil safeguarding duties, engaging with partners to ensure those most at risk are identified and support is provided
- Supporting wider health and wellbeing outcomes through partnership and safeguarding approaches

Performance Indicators:

- Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADF) recorded with comparison against 5 years of operational activity.
- Number of fatalities and non-fatal fire casualties recorded with comparison against 5 years of operational activity
- Number of high-risk HFSVs completed
- Number of initiatives targeting ADF

Local Prevention Activity:

Community safety engagement

- Delivery of HFSV
- Early intervention and safeguarding referrals
- Community awareness campaigns
- Delivering risk recognition training to local partners and volunteers
- Regular evaluation of data from incidents and partners to monitor and review outcomes

Protection

- Review and cascade Fire Investigation incident learning
- Provide advice to social housing providers, care settings, owners and occupiers

Expected Outcomes:

- Ongoing reduction in the number of Accidental Dwelling Fires compared to the 3-year rolling average
- Ongoing reduction in the number of Accidental Dwelling Fire casualties compared to the 3-year rolling average
- Improved safety and wellbeing for vulnerable individuals
- Strong partnership approach to reducing harm in the home
- Contribution to reducing inequalities associated with health, age and social vulnerability.

Delivering Against Strategic Objective:

- *Safer Communities through Prevention*
- *Safe and Effective Response*
- *Improving Performance*
- *Innovation and Investment*

4. Deliberate Fire Setting

Background:

Deliberate fire setting accounts for a large proportion of operational incidents across Highland, often linked to anti-social behaviour, showing consistent seasonal patterns, particularly during school holidays and periods of increased outdoor activity. Most deliberate fires occur in outdoor environments, including grass, refuse and open land. While overall trends show variation, targeted intervention is required in specific locations and communities where incidents are more frequent. Addressing deliberate fire setting requires a prevention-focused approach, including early intervention, youth engagement and strong partnership working to address the wider social factors that contribute to this behaviour.

Many outdoor and grass fires are linked to seasonal activity and can escalate into large outdoor fires or wildfires, under certain conditions.

We will achieve it by:

- Ensuring our staff and volunteers are appropriately trained to positively engage with young people to improve their awareness of risk
- Delivery of thematic and multi-agency action plans tailored to meet local community need
- Using data to identify and target high-risk locations and time periods
- Delivering early intervention and enhancing youth engagement programmes, such as the FireSkills scheme
- Strengthening partnership working with Police Scotland and local community groups
- Working with partners to address underlying causes of anti-social behaviour in communities

Performance Indicators:

- Number of deliberate primary and secondary fires
- Number of youth engagement programmes delivered
- Number of fire safety education interventions delivered

Local Prevention Activity:

Community Safety Engagement:

- Delivery of FireSkills courses and youth engagement programmes
- Delivery of Fire Safety Support and Education interventions delivered
- School engagement sessions
- Targeted media messaging highlighting hazards and consequences of deliberate fire setting

Preparedness:

- Intelligence sharing with partners
- Seasonal planning and targeted campaigns

Expected Outcomes:

- Reduction in the number of deliberate fires
- Reduction in anti-social behaviour
- Increased positive engagement with young people
- Contribution to safer communities and improved community wellbeing
- Diverting young people away from anti-social behaviour to positive destinations by encouraging them to be good citizens, fostering a culture of accountability and resilience.

Delivering Against Strategic Objective:

- *Safer Communities through Prevention*
- *Investing in our People*
- *Improving Performance*
- *Innovation and Investment*

5. Non-Domestic Fire Safety

Background:

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) has a statutory duty under Part 2, Section 8 of the *Fire (Scotland) Act 2005* (as amended) to promote fire safety. This includes providing information and advice aimed at preventing fires, reducing fire-related deaths and injuries, limiting the spread of fire, and promoting effective means of escape from buildings. Fires occurring in workplaces and business premises are classified as non-domestic fires.

Highland contains a diverse range of non-domestic premises, known as relevant premises, including retail outlets, care homes, hotels, visitor accommodation, short-term lets, industrial premises and rural businesses. Particular attention is given to premises where a sleeping risk exists, as these can present a greater risk to life in the event of fire.

The introduction of the short-term letting licensing scheme has increased demand for both enforcement activity and fire safety advice across the area. Maintaining a robust, intelligence-led and risk-based inspection programme remains a key priority, alongside supporting duty holders to understand and fulfil their legal responsibilities. Promoting compliance, sharing good practice and learning from incidents will help to reduce risk and support safe, resilient communities, businesses and visitors across Highland.

Highland's extensive rural environment also presents unique fire risks. Accidental primary and secondary fires, including those involving agricultural land, forestry and moorland, can have significant impacts on communities, the environment and the local economy. These landscapes are central to Highland's identity and support tourism, employment, agriculture and land-based industries.

Working with landowners, farmers, estate managers and partner organisations, SFRS plays an important role in promoting fire safety, raising awareness of wildfire risk and encouraging responsible land management practices. Through prevention, education and partnership working, we aim to reduce the likelihood and impact of fires and contribute to making Highland a safe place to live, work and visit.

We will achieve it by:

- Continuing our risk-based fire safety audit programme
- Engaging with the business community (duty holders) to highlight their responsibilities for compliance with fire legislation
- Identifying fire trends in building occupancy types and conducting, where appropriate, thematic fire safety audits
- Engagement with business and landowner communities through national forums and wildfire groups to encourage safe, preventative practices and local resilience planning

Performance Indicators:

- Number of completed fire safety audits, post fire audits and fire safety enforcement activity undertaken in line with SFRS prevention strategy and local delivery plans
- Number of non-domestic property fires and causation against a 5-year comparison of operational activity
- Number of accidental primary and secondary fires

Local Prevention Activity:

Community Safety Engagement:

- Thematic Action Plans (TAPs) to target Accidental primary and secondary fires, aligned to local community need
- Engagement sessions (including remote options) for the Highland business communities to promote Fire Safety and best practice

Protection:

- Delivery of the Fire Safety Audit programme aligned to the risk in Highland
- Thematic Audits in line with any identified local or national trends
- Incident-informed interventions

Preparedness:

- Operational intelligence visits
- Encourage the development of local area plans to support incident response to large outdoor areas

Expected Outcomes:

- Assisting the private and business sector in understanding their fire safety responsibilities and measures required to reduce risk
- Ensure buildings are safer, people feel protected and the opportunities for the acts of deliberate or wilful fire setting are reduced
- Supporting and protecting business continuity, employment and economic resilience in Highland
- Contribute to protecting our natural heritage, biodiversity and environment.

Delivering Against Strategic Objective:

- *Safer Communities through Prevention*
- *Safe and Effective Response*
- *Investing in our People*
- *Improving Performance*
- *Innovation and Investment*

6. Reducing Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals

Background:

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) remains committed to reducing the impact of false activations from automatic fire detection systems on both service delivery and local businesses. These Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) continue to result in a significant number of avoidable mobilisations across Highland.

While changes to response policies have reduced attendance at certain incidents, UFAS events still place unnecessary demands on operational resources, increasing the risks associated with emergency driving, diverting crews from prevention, protection and other essential activities.

A relatively small number of premises, particularly care homes, hospitals and hotels, account for a disproportionate number of these incidents. Continued engagement with duty holders, supported by the analysis of activation trends and the targeted management of repeat offenders, is essential to further reduce UFAS activity and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency response across the area.

We will achieve it by:

- Identifying premises with high UFAS activity levels to determine if they comply with the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and have appropriate fire safety management procedures in place
- Engaging with owners and occupiers to provide necessary support, advice and guidance for developing suitable action plans for UFAS reduction
- Robust call management and implementation of service policy for UFAS
- Educating our frontline emergency response staff to identify problems, support responsible persons and provide feedback to our fire safety enforcement department

Performance Indicators:

- Number of UFAS incidents

Local Prevention Activity:

Protection:

- Engagement with owners and occupiers of relevant premises on reducing UFAS

Preparedness

- Gathering of Operational Risk and familiarisation visits for crews

Expected Outcomes:

- Reduced unnecessary demand and impact on the public and business sector through lost working time; including employers releasing On Call staff to respond to such calls
- Reduce our carbon footprint through less vehicle movements
- Reduce the unnecessary cost of fire and rescue service response
- Safer communities through reduced risk from unnecessary mobilisations.

Delivering Against Strategic Objective:

- *Safer Communities through Prevention*
- *Improving Performance*
- *Safe and Effective Response*

7. Community Resilience

Background:

Community Resilience in Highland relies on strong local partnerships between communities, public services and the third sector.

We will continue to build upon our strong and trusted reputation for delivering prevention and intervention activities and whilst we will continue to work with partners to reduce the likelihood of any type of emergencies occurring within our communities, we also recognise that it is also about providing communities with the knowledge of the risks in their area and then equipping them with the skills, guidance and confidence to improve self-sufficiency and to become stronger and more resilient.

Many of our communities are remote and can feel isolated, particularly where there are severe weather events affecting infrastructure and road networks. We will continue our commitment to Community Planning and partnership working, nationally and locally to improve community safety wellbeing and to ensure our communities feel safe and resilient.

We will achieve it by:

- Working with partners in a whole systems approach to Prevention being at the heart of Service Delivery in Highland
- Supporting community empowerment and participation in local planning and resilience activity
- Strong representation and contribution at Community Planning Partnership Board and at community level to develop place-based solutions to local area challenges
- Strong representation and contribution within the Highlands and Islands Local Resilience Partnership (HILRP) and associated Local Resilience Groups
- Working with partners and the third sector to improve outcomes for those most at risk of harm

Performance Indicators:

- Attendance and contribution at:
 - Community Planning Partnerships & Board
 - Local Resilience Partnerships
 - Community Safety Resilience and Delivery Group
 - Multi-agency forums focussed on improving community wellbeing
- Supporting Partnership outcomes in a prevention focussed system of public service delivery

Local Prevention Activity:

Community Safety Engagement:

- Community events, targeted campaigns
- Supporting community led resilience workshops
- Work with third sector and volunteers
- Adult and child safeguarding
- Youth engagement

Preparedness:

- Robust programme of hydrant inspections
- Community resilience planning
- Effective Business continuity arrangements
- Supporting partners and communities in their preparation for severe weather and major incidents

Expected Outcomes:

- Stronger, more resilient communities with increased ability to manage risk and local impact
- Support the wellbeing of our communities through targeting support to vulnerable communities
- Improved community participation and engagement in local safety education initiatives
- Improved health outcomes for communities across Highland.

Delivering Against Strategic Objective:

- *Safer Communities through Prevention*
- *Safe and Effective Response*
- *Innovation and Investment*
- *Investing in our People*
- *Improving Performance*

Review

To ensure this Local Fire and Rescue Plan remains flexible to emerging local or national priorities a review may be carried out at any time but will be reviewed at least once every three years.

A review may also be carried out if the Scottish Minister directs it or if a new Strategic Plan is approved. Following a review, the Local Senior Officer may revise the Plan.

Contact Us

We are fully committed to continually improving the service we provide to our communities and recognise that to achieve this goal we must listen and respond to the views of the public and our partners.

We use all feedback we receive to monitor our performance and incorporate this information into our planning and governance processes in order to continually improve our service. We are proud that the majority of feedback we receive is positive and we are keen to hear examples of good practice and quality service delivery that exemplifies the standards of service that we strive to provide for the communities of Scotland.

If you have something you would like to share with us or require additional information, you can get in touch in a number of ways:

Write to: Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
 Highland Local Area Headquarters
 16 Harbour Road
 Inverness
 IV1 1TB

Phone: 01463 723000
Visit our website: www.firescotland.gov.uk

Follow us on X @fire_scot

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