

**Working together
for a safer Scotland**



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

LOCAL FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN

2026 - 2029

Scottish Borders

Safety. Teamwork. Respect. Innovation.

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Foreword

To follow in final draft.

Introduction

This Local Fire and Rescue Plan sets out the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's commitment to protecting the people, places and communities of the Scottish Borders over the period 2026–2029. It describes how we will work with our partners to reduce risk, prevent harm, strengthen community resilience and maintain an effective emergency response across one of Scotland's largest and most rural local authority areas.

The Scottish Borders is home to approximately 116,000 residents living across a diverse landscape of market towns, remote rural communities, agricultural land, forestry, rivers and coastline. This geography brings significant strengths, including strong local identity, community spirit and partnership networks, but it also creates distinct challenges for prevention, protection, preparedness and response. Rural isolation, an ageing population, transport inequalities, fuel poverty, housing pressures, climate-related risks and increasing demand across health and social care all influence vulnerability and the nature of fire and rescue risk within the area.

As Local Senior Officer for Midlothian, East Lothian and the Scottish Borders, I recognise the importance of ensuring that our services are visible, accessible and responsive to local need. This Plan reflects our ownership of local risk and our ambition to work alongside communities and partners to deliver meaningful, measurable improvements in safety and wellbeing. It is not simply a statement of intent; it provides a clear framework for action, accountability and continuous improvement.

SFRS delivers services across the Scottish Borders through wholtime fire stations at Galashiels and Hawick, supported by On-Call fire stations at Lauder, Kelso, Peebles, Innerleithen, Coldstream, Jedburgh, Selkirk, Eyemouth, Duns, West Linton and Newcastleton, with specialist resources available from across the East Service Delivery Area. Our local crews, prevention and protection staff, managers and support teams play a vital role in understanding community risk and delivering services that are tailored to the needs of the area.

This Plan aligns with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Strategic Plan 2025–2028 and supports its priorities of prevention, protection, preparedness, response, people, performance and innovation. It also contributes to the ambitions of the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership by focusing on early intervention, reducing inequalities, supporting vulnerable people, improving community resilience and making best use of shared public service resources.

We will achieve this through strong and purposeful partnership working with Scottish Borders Council, NHS Borders, Police Scotland, the Health and Social Care Partnership, Community Justice partners, housing providers, third-sector organisations, local resilience partners, businesses, landowners and communities themselves. By sharing intelligence, aligning activity and focusing collectively on those most at risk, we can prevent emergencies before they happen and improve outcomes when incidents do occur.

Our aspiration is for the Scottish Borders to be a place where people are safer in their homes, on the roads, in rural and coastal environments, and within their communities. This requires a modern, flexible and prevention-led fire and rescue service that understands local risk, values its people, listens to communities and works openly with partners. Through this Plan, SFRS will continue to demonstrate leadership, accountability and commitment to improving safety and wellbeing across the Scottish Borders.

Andrew Galloway

Local Senior Officer, Midlothian, East Lothian and Scottish Borders

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 improves.
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, reviewing how and where we deliver our services, 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 the 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

The Scottish Borders is one of the largest and most rural Local Authority areas in Scotland, with a population of approximately 116,000 residents. Around 29% of the population live in settlements of fewer than 500 people, creating unique challenges relating to access to services, emergency response and community resilience.

The area contains a diverse mix of market towns, agricultural land, forestry, coastline and remote rural communities. Hawick and Galashiels remain the largest population centres, however significant numbers of residents live in isolated communities across Berwickshire, Tweeddale, Teviot and Liddesdale and Cheviot.

The Scottish Borders also faces several long-term demographic and socio-economic challenges including:

- A projected 29.6% increase in residents aged over 75
- A declining working age population
- Fuel poverty
- Lower average wages
- Poor digital connectivity
- Transport inequality
- Increasing demand on health and social care services

These factors contribute significantly to community vulnerability and fire risk. For an external-facing Local Fire and Rescue Plan, it is important that this context is understood not only as a description of place, but as the basis for how SFRS will prioritise prevention, protection, preparedness and response activity. People living in rural and isolated communities may face greater challenges accessing services, receiving early support or recovering from emergencies. Older residents, people living alone, households experiencing fuel poverty and those with health or mobility needs may be at increased risk from fire and other emergencies. This Plan therefore focuses on reducing risk before incidents occur, improving resilience when emergencies happen and ensuring that local activity is shaped by evidence, partnership intelligence and community need.

SFRS delivers services across the Scottish Borders through two wholetime stations at Galashiels and Hawick, supported by On Call crews and further On Call fire stations at Lauder, Kelso, Peebles, Innerleithen, Coldstream, Jedburgh, Selkirk, Eyemouth, Duns, West Linton and Newcastleton, with specialist resources available from across the East Service Delivery Area.

This operating model reflects the geography of the Scottish Borders and the importance of maintaining strong local presence across both larger towns and smaller rural communities. Local crews provide emergency response, but they also play an important role in prevention, community engagement, local intelligence gathering and supporting wider resilience activity. The availability of On Call firefighters is therefore critical to sustaining local service delivery, particularly in communities where travel distances, weather conditions and limited alternative services can increase the impact of emergencies.

The Service works closely with:

- Scottish Borders Council
- NHS Borders
- Police Scotland
- Scottish Borders HSCP
- Community Justice partners
- Housing providers
- Third-sector organisations
- Local resilience partnerships

to reduce risk and improve community outcomes.

Performance Scrutiny

Performance within The Scottish Borders will continue to be scrutinised through six-monthly reporting to the Scottish Borders Police, Fire & Rescue, and Safer Communities Board. Reports will include analysis of key performance indicators and trend data to support continuous improvement and effective governance.

The following Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are scrutinised:

1. Reduction of Dwelling Fires
2. Reduction of Fire Casualties and Fatalities
3. Reduction of Deliberate Fire Setting (not including dwellings)
4. Reduction of Road Traffic Collisions
5. Reduction of All Special Service Casualties
6. Reduction of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals

Local Priorities

	SFRS Local Area Plan Priorities				
LOIP Outcomes	Priority 1 Working collaboratively with partners, we will reduce risk and improve safety for people within their homes and communities	Priority 2 Improving road safety and reducing the impact of Road Traffic Collisions	Priority 3 Enhancing community resilience, water safety and preparedness for climate-related emergencies	Priority 4 Together with our partners, we will reduce deliberate fire setting and anti-social behaviour	Priority 5 In partnership, we will reduce the occurrence and impact of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals
Outcome 1 Poverty	✓			✓	
Outcome 2 Learning, Skills and Economy			✓	✓	
Outcome 3 Good Health and Wellbeing	✓	✓	✓		
Outcome 4 Place, Community and Connectivity		✓	✓	✓	✓

1. Working collaboratively with partners, we will reduce risk and improve safety for people within their homes and communities

Background:

Accidental dwelling fires continue to present significant risk to vulnerable members of the community, particularly older people, individuals living alone and those affected by poor health, mobility issues, isolation, substance dependency, mental health concerns, hoarding, fuel poverty and other forms of social or economic disadvantage. The impact of a dwelling fire can be life-changing, affecting health, housing, independence and confidence, and in rural areas recovery may be complicated by distance from services and limited local support options.

The increasing ageing population within the Scottish Borders further reinforces the importance of prevention-focused activity. SFRS will use Home Fire Safety Visits, safeguarding referrals, partner intelligence and local incident data to identify those most at risk and provide practical support, advice and signposting. This priority is therefore about more than reducing the number of accidental dwelling fires; it is about improving safety, independence and wellbeing for people who may be least able to prevent, escape from or recover after an emergency.

We will achieve it by:

- Delivering targeted prevention activity focused on vulnerable individuals and communities.
- Strengthening partnership approaches to safeguarding, early intervention and referral pathways.
- Using local risk and performance data to target community safety activity.
- Supporting vulnerable residents through collaborative engagement with partner agencies.
- Improving awareness of fire safety, smoke detection and emerging risks.
- Maintaining operational preparedness for incidents involving vulnerable persons and domestic fire risk.

Performance Indicators:

Performance improvement for this priority will be monitored through the SFRS Performance Management Framework and local scrutiny arrangements. Relevant PMF measures provide clarity on how progress will be quantified, including:

- Reduction in accidental dwelling fires, including local trend analysis and repeat incident monitoring.
- Reduction in fire casualties and fatalities, with particular focus on vulnerable people and high-risk households.
- Delivery and targeting of Home Fire Safety Visits, including partner referrals and risk-based prioritisation.
- Safeguarding referrals, Post Domestic Incident Response activity and wider prevention outcomes arising from partnership working.

Local Prevention Activity:

Community Safety Engagement:

To support safer homes and communities across the Scottish Borders, SFRS will undertake a range of targeted prevention and community safety engagement activities including:

- Delivery of targeted Home Fire Safety Visits based on local risk profiling and partnership referrals.
- Post Domestic Incident Response visits following dwelling fires to reduce the likelihood of repeat incidents.
- Fire safety engagement within sheltered housing complexes, lunch clubs, community groups and care settings.
- Delivery of water safety and seasonal safety messaging where vulnerability factors are identified.
- Participation in safeguarding, Adult Protection and multi-agency vulnerability arrangements.
- Delivery of lithium-ion battery safety awareness and responsible charging guidance.
- Community engagement activity supporting individuals impacted by fuel poverty and social isolation.
- Partnership referrals and signposting to support services where wider vulnerability is identified.
- Participation in local engagement events and community resilience initiatives.

Protection:

SFRS Prevention staff will continue to work collaboratively with responsible persons, housing providers and partner agencies to improve fire safety standards and reduce risk within domestic and non-domestic environments.

Activity will include:

- Targeted fire safety audits within higher-risk premises.
- Fire safety engagement with housing providers and care providers.
- Support and guidance to responsible persons regarding fire safety responsibilities.
- Continued promotion of appropriate fire detection and fire safety measures.
- Partnership engagement regarding vulnerable residents and fire safety arrangements.
- Enforcement activity where appropriate in accordance with fire safety legislation.
- Thematic audit activity informed by local trends and emerging risk.

Preparedness:

Preparedness activity will ensure operational personnel remain equipped, informed and capable of responding effectively to incidents involving vulnerable individuals and domestic fire risk.

Activity will include:

- Maintaining operational competence through training and exercising.
- Continued development of operational risk information.
- Strengthening partnership information-sharing arrangements to improve operational awareness.
- Supporting firefighter awareness of emerging risks including hoarding environments and lithium-ion battery fires.
- Monitoring local incident trends and performance data to inform prevention activity.
- Supporting operational crews to undertake prevention-focused engagement within local communities.
- Contributing towards multi-agency resilience planning and preparedness arrangements.

Expected Outcomes:

This priority contributes towards the following Scottish Borders Community Plan ambitions:

- Supporting people to live healthier, safer and more independent lives.
- Reducing inequalities affecting vulnerable individuals and communities.
- Improving outcomes for older people and those most at risk.
- Tackling the impacts of poverty, fuel poverty and social isolation.
- Strengthening partnership approaches to safeguarding and early intervention.

Through targeted prevention activity and partnership working, SFRS contributes directly towards improving health, wellbeing and community safety outcomes across the Scottish Borders.

Delivering Against Strategic Objective: *This priority supports delivery of the following SFRS Strategic Objectives:*

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

2. Improving road safety and reducing the impact of Road Traffic Collisions

Background:

Road Traffic Collisions remain a significant cause of death and serious injury within the Scottish Borders. The area's extensive rural road network, dispersed population, seasonal tourism, commuting patterns, agricultural traffic and reliance on private transport all contribute to collision risk. For many communities, roads are essential routes to employment, education, healthcare and social connection, meaning that serious collisions can have a wider impact on families, communities, businesses and public services.

The Scottish Borders contains several high-risk transport routes including the A1, A7 and A68, alongside rural roads which can present additional challenges relating to speed, weather conditions, visibility, road layout, travel distances and emergency response times. Collisions may also require a complex multi-agency response involving SFRS, Police Scotland, the Scottish Ambulance Service, roads authorities and other partners. The prevention of serious injury and fatality therefore requires both public education and strong operational preparedness.

SFRS plays a key role in supporting casualty reduction through prevention activity, operational preparedness and effective multi-agency emergency response. Locally, this will include targeted education for higher-risk groups, support for partnership road safety campaigns, analysis of incident trends and continued investment in the competence of crews responding to collisions and other non-fire emergencies. This priority recognises that road safety is a shared responsibility and that SFRS can make a meaningful contribution before, during and after incidents.

We will achieve it by:

- Delivering targeted road safety engagement activity with identified high-risk groups.
- Supporting partnership approaches to casualty reduction and safer communities.
- Using local incident data and trends to inform prevention and operational activity.
- Maintaining operational preparedness and specialist rescue capability.
- Strengthening interoperability and multi-agency response arrangements.
- Supporting seasonal and rural road safety campaigns.

Performance Indicators:

Performance improvement for this priority will be monitored through the SFRS Performance Management Framework and local scrutiny arrangements. Relevant PMF measures provide clarity on how progress will be quantified, including:

- Reduction in Road Traffic Collisions attended by SFRS.
- Reduction in special service casualties, including casualties arising from Road Traffic Collisions and other non-fire emergencies.
- Local trend analysis of collision locations, casualty profiles and seasonal or rural road risk.
- Operational preparedness measures, including maintenance of RTC response competence, training and multi-agency exercising where appropriate.

Local Prevention Activity:

Community Safety Engagement:

SFRS will continue to work collaboratively with local and national partners to reduce Road Traffic Collision risk and improve community awareness.

Activity will include:

- Delivery of targeted road safety engagement within schools, colleges and community settings.
- Participation in partnership road safety campaigns and seasonal safety initiatives.
- Supporting younger driver and older driver awareness programmes.
- Engagement activity linked to adverse weather conditions and rural road safety.
- Working collaboratively with Police Scotland, Scottish Borders Council and Road Safety partners to identify emerging trends and high-risk groups.
- Participation in community engagement events to promote casualty reduction and safe driving messages.

Preparedness:

Preparedness activity will ensure operational personnel remain equipped, informed and capable of responding effectively to incidents involving Road Traffic Collisions.

Activity will include:

- Maintain operational competence in RTC response and casualty care.
- Use incident data to inform training and station preparedness.
- Support multi-agency exercising where appropriate.

Expected Outcomes:

This priority contributes towards the following Scottish Borders Community Plan ambitions:

- Supporting safer communities and reducing preventable harm.
- Improving health and wellbeing outcomes.
- Strengthening partnership working across public services.

Delivering Against Strategic Objective: This priority supports delivery of the following SFRS Strategic Objectives:

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

3. Enhancing community resilience, water safety and preparedness for climate-related emergencies

Background:

The Scottish Borders faces increasing risk from climate-related incidents including flooding, wildfire, severe weather and water-related emergencies. The area's extensive coastline, rivers, forestry land, agricultural land, hills, reservoirs, tourism locations and remote rural communities create unique operational and community resilience challenges. These incidents can be prolonged, resource-intensive and disruptive, affecting homes, businesses, transport routes, critical infrastructure, agriculture, forestry and community wellbeing.

The increasing frequency and severity of severe weather events, together with prolonged periods of dry conditions, continues to place additional demand on emergency responders and partner agencies. Flooding can isolate communities and damage property, wildfire can threaten rural livelihoods and the natural environment, and water-related incidents can occur quickly in coastal, river and inland water settings. These risks require clear public messaging, local preparedness, effective operational intelligence and strong partnership planning.

SFRS will continue to work collaboratively with communities, landowners, forestry interests, resilience partners, voluntary organisations and neighbouring emergency services to improve preparedness, reduce risk and enhance community resilience. This includes supporting communities to understand local hazards, preparing operational crews for complex environmental incidents, and contributing to multi-agency planning for severe weather, wildfire, flooding and water safety. The priority reflects the need to adapt local service delivery to a changing climate while supporting communities to become safer and more resilient.

We will achieve it by:

- Delivering targeted water safety and seasonal prevention campaigns.
- Supporting community resilience and preparedness arrangements.
- Strengthening partnership working relating to flooding, wildfire and severe weather response.
- Improving operational preparedness for climate-related incidents.
- Developing tactical plans and operational intelligence for high-risk locations.
- Supporting community awareness of environmental and outdoor safety risks.

Performance Indicators:

Performance improvement for this priority will be monitored through the SFRS Performance Management Framework and local scrutiny arrangements. Relevant PMF measures provide clarity on how progress will be quantified, including:

- Reduction in special service casualties, including water-related and weather-related incidents where applicable.
- Reduction in deliberate fire setting where incidents relate to outdoor fires, wildfire risk or environmental harm.
- Reduction in fire casualties and harm arising from climate-related or environmental incidents.
- Local monitoring of flood, wildfire, water rescue and severe weather demand to inform preparedness, prevention and partnership planning.

Local Prevention Activity:

Community Safety Engagement:

SFRS will undertake a range of targeted prevention and engagement activities aimed at improving resilience and reducing risk within communities.

Activity will include:

- Delivery of targeted water safety campaigns across coastal, river and inland water locations.
- Supporting local water safety initiatives and community groups.
- Continuing partnership work through initiatives and other local safety campaigns.
- Delivery of seasonal prevention campaigns relating to flooding, wildfire and severe weather.
- Supporting schools and youth engagement activity focused on outdoor safety.
- Community resilience engagement with rural and isolated communities.
- Working collaboratively with landowners, forestry organisations and rural businesses to reduce wildfire risk.

Preparedness:

Preparedness activity will ensure operational personnel remain capable of responding effectively to flooding, wildfire and water-related incidents.

Activity will include:

- Development and maintenance of tactical wildfire response plans.
- Supporting resilience planning arrangements across critical infrastructure and vulnerable communities.
- Working collaboratively with landowners and forestry partners to improve operational access and preparedness.
- Contributing towards Local Resilience Partnership activity and severe weather planning.
- Using thematic analysis and local intelligence to identify emerging environmental risks.
- Undertaking multi-agency exercising linked to severe weather and climate-related emergencies.
- Enhancing cross-border interoperability arrangements with neighbouring emergency services and resilience partners.

Expected Outcomes:

This priority contributes towards the following Scottish Borders Community Plan ambitions:

- Building stronger and more resilient communities.
- Supporting climate adaptation and environmental sustainability.
- Reducing inequalities experienced within rural and isolated communities.
- Improving community wellbeing and public safety.
- Strengthening multi-agency partnership resilience arrangements.

Delivering Against Strategic Objective: This priority supports delivery of the following SFRS Strategic Objectives:

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

4. Together with our partners, we will reduce deliberate fire setting and anti-social behaviour

Background:

Deliberate fire setting and anti-social behaviour continue to impact communities across the Scottish Borders and place unnecessary demand on emergency services. Secondary fires, vandalism, fire setting in open spaces, refuse fires and seasonal anti-social behaviour incidents can present significant risk to public safety, property, the environment and community confidence. Although these incidents may sometimes appear low-level, their cumulative impact can be substantial, particularly where they occur repeatedly in the same communities or involve young people at risk of wider harm.

SFRS recognises the importance of early intervention, partnership working and youth engagement in reducing deliberate fire setting and improving community wellbeing. This priority will focus on using local intelligence, incident trends and partner knowledge to identify hotspot areas, repeat behaviours and opportunities for prevention. By working with Police Scotland, Scottish Borders Council, education services, youth services, community safety partners and local communities, SFRS will support a coordinated approach that reduces harm, diverts individuals from risk-taking behaviour and strengthens community confidence.

We will achieve it by:

- Delivering targeted prevention and youth engagement activity.
- Supporting partnership approaches to reducing anti-social behaviour.
- Using local intelligence and incident trends to target activity.
- Strengthening seasonal prevention campaigns and community reassurance activity.
- Supporting early intervention and education programmes.
- Working collaboratively with partners to identify emerging risks and hotspot locations.

Performance Indicators:

Performance improvement for this priority will be monitored through the SFRS Performance Management Framework and local scrutiny arrangements. Relevant PMF measures provide clarity on how progress will be quantified, including:

- Reduction in deliberate fires, including secondary fires, refuse fires, outdoor fires and repeat incidents in hotspot locations.
- Local trend analysis of deliberate fire setting and anti-social behaviour-related incident demand.
- Evidence of targeted prevention, youth engagement and partnership activity in locations or groups identified through local intelligence.

Local Prevention Activity:

Community Safety Engagement:

SFRS will continue to work collaboratively with communities and partners to reduce deliberate fire setting and improve community safety.

Activity will include:

- Delivery of youth engagement and fire safety education programmes.
- Participation in school engagement activity and local diversionary initiatives.
- Supporting partnership anti-social behaviour campaigns and community reassurance initiatives.
- Delivery of seasonal campaigns linked to bonfire safety and secondary fire prevention.

- Participation in local community safety events and partnership activity.
- Engagement with vulnerable individuals and communities where fire-setting behaviour or anti-social behaviour has been identified.

Protection:

Protection activity will support a coordinated and intelligence-led approach to reducing deliberate fires and associated community risk.

Activity will include:

- Joint working with Police Scotland and local authority partners.
- Sharing local intelligence and incident trends to identify hotspot areas.
- Supporting environmental risk reduction initiatives where appropriate.
- Using thematic analysis to inform prevention activity and resource deployment.
- Supporting partnership approaches to reducing repeat incidents and community harm.

Expected Outcomes:

This priority contributes towards the following Scottish Borders Community Plan ambitions:

- Supporting safer communities.
- Improving outcomes for children and young people.
- Reducing harm and anti-social behaviour within communities.
- Strengthening early intervention and prevention activity.
- Supporting partnership approaches to community wellbeing and community justice.

Delivering Against Strategic Objective: This priority supports delivery of the following SFRS Strategic Objectives:

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

5. In partnership, we will reduce the occurrence and impact of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals

Background:

Whilst the introduction of the revised SFRS Unwanted Fire Alarm Signal (UFAS) response model has significantly reduced unnecessary mobilisations, Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals continue to place avoidable demand on operational resources across the Scottish Borders. False or avoidable activations can occur in workplaces, public buildings, care settings, commercial premises and community facilities, often as a result of system management issues, environmental factors, poor maintenance, cooking fumes, contractor activity or insufficient staff awareness.

Repeat activations can impact operational availability, increase appliance movements across large geographical areas and divert resources away from genuine emergencies. In a rural local authority area, unnecessary mobilisations can have a disproportionate impact because crews and appliances may need to travel longer distances and may be unavailable for other incidents. Reducing avoidable UFAS demand therefore supports safer communities, better use of public resources and improved availability for emergency response.

Working collaboratively with responsible persons, duty holders, businesses, care providers, public sector partners and community organisations remains essential in reducing unnecessary alarm activations and improving fire safety management arrangements. This priority will use local data to identify repeat premises, provide advice and support, promote good alarm management practice and take proportionate enforcement action where necessary. It also reinforces the wider protection role of SFRS in helping premises remain safe, compliant and resilient.

We will achieve it by:

- Supporting responsible persons to improve fire alarm management arrangements.
- Using local incident data and trends to identify repeat callers and premises of concern.
- Delivering targeted engagement and thematic audit activity.
- Promoting good fire safety management practices.
- Working collaboratively with duty holders and partner organisations to reduce avoidable activations.
- Monitoring UFAS performance and directing resources towards areas of greatest demand.

Performance Indicators:

Performance improvement for this priority will be monitored through the SFRS Performance Management Framework and local scrutiny arrangements. Relevant PMF measures provide clarity on how progress will be quantified, including:

- Reduction in Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals attended by SFRS.
- Monitoring of repeat UFAS premises and avoidable activations to support targeted engagement and intervention.
- Use of local UFAS demand trends to inform protection activity, thematic audits and engagement with responsible persons.
- Assessment of the impact of UFAS reduction activity on operational availability and efficient use of resources.

Local Prevention Activity:

Protection:

SFRS will work collaboratively with local businesses, organisations and community partners to improve awareness and understanding of fire alarm management responsibilities.

Activity will include:

- Engagement with responsible persons and duty holders regarding fire alarm management.
- Participation in business engagement events and partnership forums.
- Promoting awareness of the impact of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals on emergency service resources.
- Providing advice and guidance on reducing false activations.
- Supporting local organisations to review fire safety procedures and arrangements.
- Encouraging a proactive approach to alarm maintenance and management.

Expected Outcomes:

This priority contributes towards the following Scottish Borders Community Plan ambitions:

- Supporting safer communities.
- Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of public services.
- Strengthening partnership working with local businesses and organisations.
- Supporting resilient and sustainable communities.

Delivering Against Strategic Objective: This priority supports delivery of the following SFRS Strategic Objectives:

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

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 East Lothian, Midlothian and The Scottish Borders Dalkeith Fire Station Abbey Road Dalkeith EH22 3AD
Phone:	0303 001 6580
Visit our website:	www.firescotland.gov.uk
Follow us on Twitter	@scotfire_MELSB
Like us on Facebook	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service



firescotland.gov.uk