



Report to: SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
Date: THURSDAY 28 FEBRUARY 2013
Report By: CHIEF OFFICER ALASDAIR HAY

Subject: FIRE AND RESCUE FRAMEWORK FOR SCOTLAND 2013 CONSULTATION
RESPONSE

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide Members with the finalised SFRS response to the consultation exercise on the FRS Framework for Scotland 2013 (*Appendix A*).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Board is invited to:
- (a) Note the submission of the SFRS response to the consultation on the Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland; and
 - (b) To seek a response from the Scottish Government on the issues SFRS has raised in its response, in particular, on Performance Management.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2013 was issued for consultation by the Scottish Government with a deadline for response of 18 February 2013. At the Board meeting held on 14 January 2013, the Board agreed that a draft be prepared by the Chair, Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer and then circulated for comment to members prior to being formally submitted to Scottish Government.
- 3.2 The response was submitted on Wednesday 20 February 2013, with the extension to the original deadline of 18 February being agreed with Scottish Government colleagues.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 There are no issues directly arising from this report.

**ALASDAIR HAY
CHIEF OFFICER**

28 February 2013

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Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2013 Consultation Response

Please find detailed below the response from SFRS to the consultation on the Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2013 which will be reported to the next meeting of the SFRS Board on 28 February 2013.

The comments have been drawn together on the basis of issues raised by members during their development and planning discussions related to (for example) the Governance and Accountability Framework, the development of the Board's future business agenda and development of the Strategic Plan.

It is understood that that Lead Officers from the Reform Team had the opportunity to populate the chapters setting out the strategic priorities for each functional area. However, there is one section in relation to specialist rescue where the Service has sought to make an amendment for the purposes of clarification.

1. NATIONAL OUTCOMES(PARA 3)

1.1 The Framework gives prominence to four of the National Outcomes that SG considers should underpin our shared aspirations. However, a further 2 outcomes would appear to be directly relevant to the business of a modern Fire and Rescue Service:

- (i) **'Our people are able to maintain their independence as they get older and are able to access appropriate support when they need it'**

It should be acknowledged that the SFRS shares this aspiration with Scottish Government given the increasing incidence of fires involving older people and lending credence to a targeted approach to community and home fire safety.

- (ii) **We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk**

Our aspiration to ensure a degree of self-reliance within communities and a targeted multi-agency approach that works with 'at risk' groups to engender a safer home environment, but which also works with young people to combat anti-social behaviour, is very much on the SFRS radar.

2. SFRS VALUES (PARA 14)

- 2.1 This section references the exciting opportunity for SFRS to define its core values and ethos in a way which exemplifies a modern, effective public sector organisation. Members have started the process which will shape those values through discussions on the development of the Strategic Plan. The Board will demonstrate strategic leadership by exhibiting behaviours that will accord with the agreed set of values and by communicating their importance to the overall wellbeing of the organisation. As the Board develops its thinking in this area it will be important to engage with staff to ensure that they have the opportunity to influence and connect with those values.

3. PARTNERSHIP WORKING (PARA 15)

- 3.1 Reference is made here to SFRS building on its partnerships with a range of other Justice sector bodies with its focus on the most vulnerable and most at risk. As we have referenced in comments on the draft Governance and Accountability (G&A) Framework, these partnerships are going to be most valuable in other sectors including social care, education, health, voluntary and business, and not just confined to those across the rest of the Justice sector. Our ambition will be to work closely and flexibly with other agencies for the purpose of effective service delivery and maximising our ability to achieve good outcomes for our communities. It is clear to the Board that the Service will be most successful in delivering against the National Outcomes on the basis of an effective multi-agency approach. It is important that Scottish Government ensures co-ordination across a number of governmental portfolios to address a multi-agency strategic approach for both the achievement of national outcomes and to maximise the benefits of public sector reform. In addition, we would also seek to build on good practice from the existing Services in the area of partnership, and look to examples from other countries.

4. GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY (PARA 36)

- 4.1 This point was raised by members at the development session on the G&A Framework, and the problem may never arise; however, members feel it is worth flagging. Local plans are to be approved by the Local Authority and, of course, the SFRS through LSOs will work collaboratively with local authorities to develop plans. Priorities and outcomes for the area will be articulated through the Single Outcome Agreements which will make this process much simpler.
- 4.2 In the event, however, that a local authority, for whatever reason, does not sign off the plan, the SFRS must still be able to deploy its resources according to community risk and its overall statutory responsibilities. We would wish to stress that our emphasis here is on working constructively with local government and, while we would not wish any specific reference in the Framework, we would wish to ensure that there was a mechanism in place to hold early discussions, if required, with Scottish Government.

5. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND SCRUTINY (PARA 44)

- 5.1 The Framework sets out a general 'outcome driven approach'; however, there is significant weight placed on the achievement of the 'stretch' targets and in the KPIs set out in Appendix A. This could undermine the overall intent of the Framework and the general principles of a targeted approach to service delivery. For example, with regard to HFSVs and CFS activity, we should be considering this in terms of risk profiles not just the per 1000 head of population, given that the risk will differ across Scottish communities. Accordingly, SFRS would seek to develop more appropriate measures. We also need to be able to utilise sophisticated risk profiling that, for example, detects high risk individuals living in low risk communities. In other words, we should not be tied into a single method of considering risk profiles but utilise the Strategic Assessment which outlines the community risk profile of our country to support our planning. In community fire safety, as a whole, it will be important to measure activity levels but we should also focus on those risk areas that have been targeted and the affects we have had in shifting risk from high to medium and low.
- 5.2 The difficulty with this general approach to performance measurement is that it is quantitative and appears to bear little relation to the aims of reform. For example, there is nothing to measure our performance in creating a better connection to local communities, something which could be developed through the use of survey-based techniques. In addition, it is not helpful to establish targets, for example, in the area of special services where we either cannot influence the target given its relationship to external environmental factors, or where our activity in that area is integrated with that of other agencies.
- 5.3 In giving such prominence to a very challenging target of reducing staff sickness absence by 10% each year, it appears that Scottish Government is indicating that staff sickness absence is one of the most important issues that needs to be addressed by the new Service; however, in examining local government sickness absence rates in 2011/12, these have mostly improved compared to 2010/11. For example:
- 6.2 days for Teachers (2010/11 - 6.6 days);
 - 10.4 days for Council staff (2010/11 - 10.8 days);
 - 7.2 days for Fire and Rescue Services (2010/11 - 8.3 days);
 - Absence rates for Police Officers were higher in 2011/12 at 4.2% compared to 3.8% in 2010/11.

This is not to say that, as an internal management target, we would not want to keep a close eye on its future direction and to take best efforts to keep the figures on a downward trajectory but, given the evidence, it would seem inappropriate to have such a published target. This is a time of significant change for our workforce when our aspiration should be to motivate and encourage.

- 5.4 As a general comment relating to the proposed measures, the Board would wish to see if they are comparative across other risk critical services and to ensure that the SFRS is aligned with the Government's overall objective of measuring performance against outcomes. The opportunity to determine more appropriate methods of

measurement in collaboration with Scottish Government officials would be welcomed.

- 5.5 In relation to planning complementary and proportionate scrutiny activity, members were advised that the Chief Inspector and Auditor General would be developing an MOU. This is welcomed by members, and an opportunity to have sight of this would be helpful.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT (PARA 57)

- 6.1 The framework makes specific reference to the need for a robust national strategic assessment, and we should make the point that this work has been completed, and will be used to support the discussions on developing the Strategic Plan. While the risks we face as a corporate body will inevitably influence our ability to deliver to communities, we will also need to ensure effective management processes are in place to manage organisational risk as a whole.

7. SPECIALIST RESCUE (PARA 71)

- 7.1 The SFRS is suggesting some changes to the wording associated with the strategic priorities in Chapter 3 '*More Access to Specialist Resources and National Capacity*' and these are detailed below.

8. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- 8.1 The SFRS must clarify and communicate the parameters of its operational functions, whilst explicitly recognising the need to adapt and improvise in unusual and difficult-to-define circumstances. All of this should fall within the scope of the community risk planning which the SFRS undertakes. In doing so, the Service should take other reforms into account.
- 8.2 When considering the risk management priorities set out in Chapter 2, the SFRS should aim to create more equal access to national capacity, with an expectation that areas with similar risk profiles should normally have similar provision.
- 8.3 Whilst acknowledging the UK Search & Rescue Framework which sets out the arrangements for Search & Rescue in the United Kingdom, the SFRS should actively develop a leading role as a champion of specialist rescue. The SFRS should proactively engage with the other emergency services and relevant voluntary groups to understand and manage the risk across Scotland, and, in doing so, create more equal access to specialist support based on community risk.
- 8.4 The SFRS should consider working with partners to establish a national multi agency register of assets to cover areas of specialist rescue, setting out the criteria for their registration, such as availability, procedures, equipment and training.
- 8.5 Through its involvement in multi-agency risk assessment, emergency planning and response (through the Strategic Co-ordinating Groups), the SFRS should ensure that its resources and capabilities are used, where possible, to help prevent and to

respond to, and recover from emergencies and major incidents, as effectively as possible. These incidents could be unpredictable, novel and could result from a wide range of causes including CBRN, terrorist activity and the effects of climate change. Further details on risk and resilience can be found in Chapter 2 of the framework.

Explanatory Notes

Para 8.3

- i. The second sentence has been added to reflect that we will continue to operate within existing frameworks. This further re-assures partners that whilst we want to be more pro-active, we are not opting out of any UK wide agreements on who does what.
- ii. The word 'leading' had been added to ensure that the SFRS will recognise that it best positioned to drive and promote this type of work. It also recognises that we cannot do this alone and a partnership approach is required.
- iii. The word 'co-ordinator' has been removed as it raised concerns with ACPOS and others such the mountain rescue organisations that we would take on the actual co-ordination of resources for an emergency incident. This was not the intent as the co-ordination referred to was seen as during the preparation and planning phases not when the 999 is actually received. This has now been re-emphasised in this and the next bullet points.
- iv. This is a strong steer that we should take a lead in the matter and not sit back waiting for others.

Para 8.4

This provides some clarity that the work is to be done collaboratively and the register should be of more than just SFRS assets.