2020

LOCAL FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN

ANGUS

Contents

Introduction

It is my pleasure to introduce the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's (SFRS) Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Angus 2020-23. This sets out our priorities for improving community safety, whilst helping to address inequalities and enhancing the overall wellbeing of the communities of Angus.

In developing this plan, we have been mindful of the range of activities the SFRS might have to undertake in Angus on any given day. These might include fitting a smoke alarm in the home of a vulnerable person, visiting a school to educate young people on the dangers of fire, rescuing someone involved in a road traffic collision or dealing with flooding similar to what we have experienced in recent years.

The role of the SFRS is changing to meet some significant future challenges such as social change, climate change and terrorism. The plan therefore outlines how we aim to meet the challenges ahead while delivering on making Angus safer through improved outcomes. This includes how we will go about broadening our safety role in the community. To do this, we will build on our proven track record in prevention work and focus our attention on reducing the wider safety risks associated with unintentional harm. This is mainly driven by social changes such as an ageing population, so protecting these types of vulnerable people from harm in the home, such as slips, trips and falls is a priority for us in this plan.

Early in 2020 we faced an unprecedented challenge in the form of a global pandemic. In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, we dramatically changed how we worked so that we could continue to deliver an emergency service whilst keeping our staff and the public safe.

The pandemic is expected to have a lasting effect on society and this will change the way in which we deliver services in the long-term. The full implications are not yet known and this makes it difficult to make any far-reaching plans with certainty. As such we will keep the priorities of this Plan under regular review to ensure it remains relevant and appropriate.

The SFRS does not operate in isolation and this plan supports the crucial role of Community Planning in helping to deliver the vision, priorities and outcomes of the Angus Community Planning Partnership (CPP) through the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) and Locality Plans.

All community partners must work closely together to ensure we tackle inequalities and improve the wide range of outcomes for our communities of Angus. Building on our successes through partnership working, we believe that we can make the communities of Angus safer and more secure, and therefore contribute towards Angus' vision of being a great place to live, work and visit.

The plan will be subject to regular review. This will allow us to be reactive to local needs and the changing circumstances of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

Gordon Pryde

Local Senior Officer

National Context

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

Our Strategic Plan 2019-22 has been designed to meet these national expectations. Set against a complex and evolving backdrop our Strategic Plan encapsulates our mission, values and our strategic outcomes and objectives.

Working Together for a Safer Scotland

OUTCOME 1
Our collaborative and targeted prevention and protection activities improve community safety and wellbeing, and support sustainable economic growth.

OUTCOME 2
Our flexible operational model provides an effective emergency response to meet diverse community risks across Scotland.

Safety

Prevention

Response

Innovation

Teamwork

To work in partnership with communities and others in the public, private and third sectors, on prevention, protection and response, to improve the safety and well-being of people throughout Scotland

Public Value

People

Respect

OUTCOME 4
We are fully accountable and maximise our public value by delivering a high quality, sustainable fire and rescue service for Scotland.

OUTCOME 3
We are a great place to work where our people are safe, supported and empowered to deliver high performing innovative services.

To ensure we can prevent the worst from happening and to be fully prepared to respond should we called, we need to be aware of any new changing risks which threaten the safety of communities or the workforce. When developing our most recent plan, cognisance was given to: our changing population and the forecasted rise in over 75s: doing what we can to balance social and economic inequality; climate change and the devastating impact the inclement weather can have on peoples' lives and livelihoods; and the threat of terrorism.

Our Strategic Plan is supported by a three-year Strategic Plan Programme which provides details on all the activities we intend to carry out to successfully achieve our ambitions. The Programme informs our Annual Operating Plan, which provides specific detail on the actions we carry out each year, and from which our performance is scrutinised.

This Plan is a statutory Local Fire and Rescue Plan. It sets local direction to meet the strategic outcomes and objectives outlined above. It also demonstrates how we will contribute to Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs).

Local Context

About Angus

Angus covers an area of 842 square miles and has a population of almost 117,000. Approximately 75% of the population is concentrated primarily within the seven main towns of Forfar, Kirriemuir, Montrose, Brechin, Arbroath, Carnoustie and Monifieth and has varied geography that includes coastal areas facing out to the North Sea, prime agricultural land, mountains and glens, and an extensive rural road and river network.

This predicted rise in this population over the next 15 - 20 years is only around 3000 but the make-up of the population will see considerable change. The number of people aged over 65 will rise significantly as a percentage of the total population, whilst those aged under 18 will reduce.

Angus, while generally a prosperous and successful area of Scotland, contains pockets of relative deprivation linked to unemployment, low incomes, access to housing and services, and poorer health outcomes. The areas of greatest deprivation are to be found in the seven main towns, particularly Arbroath where the most deprived data-zones in Angus exist.

About the SFRS in Angus

The SFRS has 6 community fire stations strategically located in Angus. These stations provide prevention, protection and response services tailored to local needs and comprise of one Wholetime/Retained (RDS) station and 5 RDS stations.

Our Wholetime station is crewed by 5 teams of full-time firefighters to provide 24/7 operational cover. This is their primary occupation and they undertake some 20 hours plus of training and community engagement activity. In contrast, our RDS stations are crewed by part-time firefighters who primarily work in other occupations. They attend one routine training night per week and respond by pager, to provide 24/7 on call operational cover.

Delivering our services, to meet local needs, when our stations are predominantly crewed by RDS firefighters can be quite challenging. So, they are supported by a local Management Team and Community Action Team, who work alongside Community Planning Partners to help plan, coordinate and deliver activities for improving the safety and wellbeing of our communities.
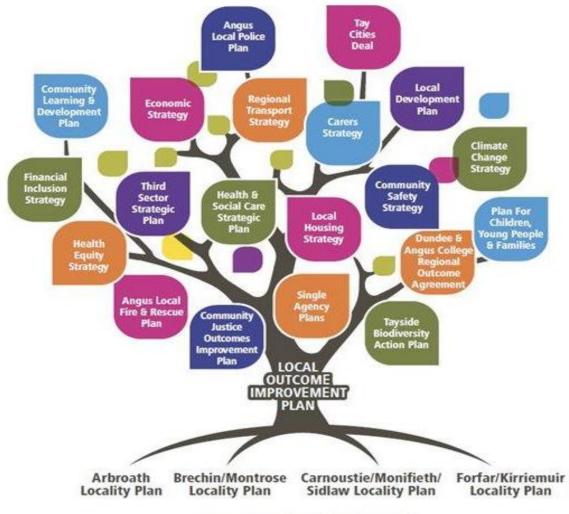
About Community Planning in Angus

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires community planning partners to come together in Angus to form a CPP, and focus on improving local outcomes in the Angus area.

The Angus Community Plan sets out the outcomes which the Angus CPP will prioritise for improvement and through 4 Locality Plans, focus priorities on the geographical areas of Angus that experience the poorest outcomes.

As a statutory partner of the Angus CPP, we will continue to fully contribute towards improving the local outcomes in the Angus Plan and help take forward the priorities in the locality plans. Our work towards supporting this, sits within the context of the Angus Local Fire and Rescue Plan. In addition to other partner plans and strategies, the shared approach for improving local outcomes in Angus is illustrated in Diagram one.

Diagram One – Shared Approach for Improving Local Outcomes in Angus

About Local Scrutiny of our Performance in Angus

As part of the process of scrutinising local fire and rescue service delivery, we are required to submit quarterly performance reports to Angus Council's Scrutiny and Audit Committee. The basis of these reports is to present information on the performance of the SFRS against the priorities contained within the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Angus

We undertook a review of our performance during 2020, and along with an assessment of the opportunities for change and future challenges we face, this information provided us with the basis for developing the priorities set-out on the following pages of this plan. This review followed on from the production of the SFRS Strategic Plan 2019-22.

Local Priorities

1.   Improving Fire Safety in the Home

Amongst the range of emergencies that we attend in Angus, fires in the home account for approximately 6% of operational demand. This, however is the category of fire in which individuals are most likely to die or be injured. Therefore, improving fire safety in the home continues to be a priority for us.

There are over 53,000 homes in Angus and on average, we attend 84 fires in these each year. High severity house fires in Angus continue to be few, representing around 8% of all house fires and the rate of fire fatalities and casualties in Angus is below the Scottish average. This relatively low frequency and impact of fire in the home reflects the focus on prevention and protection work and has contributed to making Angus one of the safest places to live. Nonetheless, evidence indicates that it's the most vulnerable individuals in our communities and those that are living in certain geographical areas of Angus, who are at higher risk from fire in the home and experience poorer outcomes. The elderly account for almost half of all fire casualties. Fires in the home tend to occur more frequently in the most deprived areas of Angus, and the rural nature of Angus gives rise to individuals living in social isolation who may be more vulnerable to fire. In addition to this, there is a high percentage of migrant workers, who as a community have suffered the tragic consequences of fire in the past.

Individuals who are at higher risk from fire are, often, known to other agencies such as health, social care or criminal justice. This highlights the absolute need to share knowledge and information between services about those most vulnerable in our Angus communities. Collaborative working will contribute to the reduction of fire risk in their homes.

A home fire safety visit, where firefighters visit people in their homes to provide fire safety advice and fit free detection will continue to be our main tool to improve fire safety in the home. We will monitor and broaden this over coming years to identify what other protection we can offer communities. But a smoke alarm cannot prevent a fire – it can only alert the occupant that a fire may have started. The best way of reducing the potential for fires to occur is to influence and change the behaviour of residents and we will continue to concentrate our efforts on how to improve their fire safety awareness.

Working with our partners and communities in Angus we will:
- Share relevant information and analyse data, to identify individuals, households, communities and geographical areas most at risk from fire.
- Target our Home Fire Safety Visits, and Fire Safety education and advice at those who are identified as being most at risk from fire.
- Make it easier for our partners to refer vulnerable individuals who are at risk from fire.
- Educate children and young people on the risks from fire, making Angus a safer place for the future.

Progress will be monitored by:
- Reviewing the number of fires in the home and their severity.
- Assessing the number and severity of fire casualties and fatalities.
- Analysis the number of high risk referrals we receive from partners.

The local outcomes we aim to improve are:
- Communities in Angus will be safe, secure, vibrant and sustainable.
- People in Angus will be physically, mentally and emotionally healthy.
- An enhanced protected and enjoyed natural and built environment.

2. Improving Fire Safety and Resilience in the Business Community

Non-domestic fires tend to involve businesses - the backbone of the Angus economy. Ensuring businesses are better protected and more resilient to fire, and can continue to contribute to the Angus economy is a key priority for us during these tough economic times.

The SFRS has a statutory duty under Part 3 of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 (the Act) to provide advice and enforce fire safety regulations in most non-domestic premises. In Angus, approximately 5000 non-domestic premises are covered by the Act, which requires the duty holders to meet certain responsibilities in relation to maintaining safe business environments.

Our approach of educating and advising duty holders on how to build and maintain safe business environments, combined with enforcing our powers to ensure compliance is working effectively, means that in Angus we have one of the lowest rates of non-domestic fires in the whole of Scotland.

We aim to build on this success by operating a risk-based fire safety audit programme, which is intelligence led and focusses our resources on auditing premises with high life risk and where there is greater likelihood of fire. These will include buildings important to our heritage and critical to our local infrastructure

Working with our partners and communities in Angus we will:
- Prioritise out Fire Safety Audits and Operational Reassurance Visits towards protecting non-domestic premises with the highest life risk and those where there is a greatest risk of fire.
- Support every business that has been affected by a fire, by undertaking a Post Fire Audit of the premises and assisting their recovery in the quickest and most efficient way.
- Respond promptly to complaints over fire safety compliance in non-domestic premises.
- Where relevant, advise on the suitability of fire safety provision in all new non-domestic premises under construction and existing premises undergoing major refurbishment.
- Engage with duty holders one how to meet fire safety compliance, to ease the burden on the business community.

Progress will be monitored by:
- Reviewing the number of fires in non-domestic premises and the type of premises involved in fire.
- Reviewing the number and types of Fire Safety Audits, and Operational Re-Assurance Visits carried out across Angus.
- Assessing the outcome of Fire Safety Audits carried out in non-domestic premises.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of our response to complaints over fire safety compliance in non-domestic premises.

The local outcomes we aim to improve are:
- Communities in Angus will be safer, secure, vibrant and sustainable.
- Angus will have an inclusive and sustainable economy.
- An enhanced, protected and enjoyed natural and built environment.

3.   Minimising the Impact of Unintentional Harm

The Building Safer Communities Phase 2: National Strategic Assessment of Unintentional Harm defines these types of incidents as "unintentional physical and psychological harm that could have been predicted and prevented". Unintentional harm in Scotland is a heavy burden on the population in terms of death and injury, but is also a significant economic burden for public services. Annually, there are 1250-1400 deaths from unintentional harm in Scotland and almost 200 000 incidents each year resulting in huge costs to the public purse. This can be reduced through more focus on prevention and education, targeted interventions and partnership working.

Unintentional harm in the home (falls in particular) has been identified as one of the most prominent issues and the associated risk profile closely matches those people that are most at risk from fire, in particular the elderly. It therefore makes absolute sense that our work goes beyond making people safer from fire. We will position unintentional harm as a local priority, and work with our partners to make the most vulnerable people in Angus safer from experiencing unintentional harm in the home, much of which is driven by social and economic inequality.

Out-with the home environment, we experience the impact of unintentional harm through our response to a range of non-fire related emergencies, and in Angus, it is Road Traffic Collisions (RTC) which are the most significant cause of non-fire related deaths and injuries. Working with our Community Planning partners, we will ensure there is a co-ordinated and joined up approach to road safety prevention activity in Angus. With a pooling of expertise and a range of activities, we will target the 'at risk groups' to reduce the number of deaths and injuries resulting from RTC's.

Working with our partners and communities in Angus we will:
- Re-focus our Home Fire Safety Visit Programme to include the assessment of unintentional harm in the home and wider health issues.
- Train our firefighters to recognise and respond to the risk factors associated with unintentional harm in the home.
- Share key data and jointly deliver targeted interventions, to reduce the incidence and impact of unintentional harm among vulnerable people in the home.
- Agree referral pathways, considering expanding our Home Fire Safety Visit Programme to include unintentional harm in the home.
- Target road safety activities from early years to young drivers and other 'at risk groups'.

Progress will be monitored by:
- Analysing the number of unintentional harm referrals that we make to our partners.
- Monitoring the number of attendances at RTCs and the frequency and severity of injuries arising from RTCs.
- Reviewing the number of non-fire related emergencies and the frequency and severity of injuries arising from these incidents.
- Assessing the number of people that we train in CPR.

The local outcomes we aim to improve are:
- Communities in Angus will be safe, secure, vibrant and sustainable.
- People in Angus will be physically, mentally and emotionally healthy.
- Children in Angus will have the best start in live.

4. Reducing Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals

More than 60% of our emergency calls in Angus turn out to be false alarms, and those caused by Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA) are the most frequent attendance made by us. This is a significant drain on our resources and travelling to these incidents under blue-light conditions presents an undue risk to our firefighters and other road users due to an increased likelihood of vehicle accidents occurring.

Every Unwanted Fire Alarm Signal (UFAS) from an AFA has an economic impact on businesses. As our stations in Angus are predominantly crewed by RDS firefighters, there is also an indirect impact on the businesses who employ our RDS staff, through time lost due to them being released to respond to calls that inevitably turn out to be false alarms.

Whilst we encourage the use of AFA systems to save lives and protect buildings, more can be done to reduce the significant burden to us and businesses that UFAS cause. A continued reduction in UFAS could release resources to deploy on other activities that will deliver greater public value in Angus, including the broader range of prevention work associated with tackling unintentional harm.

Evidence indicates that properties such as care homes, sheltered housing and hospitals contribute to the majority of UFAS in Angus. Our approach to driving down the number of UFAS we attend in Angus will focus on encouraging ownership of the issue by property owners/occupiers along with advice and engagement.

Working with our partners and communities in Angus we will:
- Investigate the cause of every UFAS event and engage with the premises owner/occupier, to agree measures for preventing reoccurrence.
- Identify the premises that have persistent call outs due to UFAS, and work with the owner/occupiers to develop, implement and monitor UFAS demand reduction pans.
- Enforce formal action on the owner/occupiers or premises that are generating unacceptable levels of UFAS, and are failing to take ownership of the issue.

Progress will be monitored by:
- Reviewing the number of UFAS and the type of premises generating them across Angus.
- Evaluating the outcomes of occupier's demand reduction plans to review effectiveness, and identify and share good practice.
- Monitoring our attendances at UFAS to ensure they are based on assessment of risk and demand.

The local outcomes we aim to improve are:
- The SFRS has the capacity to contribute to a broader range of prevention work.
- Angus will have an inclusive and sustainable economy.
- Improved firefighter safety and community safety.

5.   Reducing Deliberate Fires

Protecting the communities of Angus isn't just about preventing accidental fires, we also work hard to tackle the problem of deliberate fire-setting.

During 2019/20, there were 132 deliberate fires in Angus which has shown a drop over the last 3 years. This has brought us to a point where the rate of deliberate fires in Angus is below the Scottish average however, we still need to do more because these fires have a serious economic impact, can cause injury, property damage and divert firefighters from attending more serious incidents.

In Angus, secondary fires (e.g. rubbish/bins and grass etc) make up around 80% of the deliberate fires we attend, with the remainder involving occupied buildings, vehicles and outdoor structures such as sheds (Primary Fires). Evidence indicates that youths are the biggest perpetrators of deliberate secondary fires and often, it's the more deprived areas of Angus that suffer the consequences.

Collaborative working is key to tackling deliberate fires. We will use the Angus Community Planning Partnership as a platform for engaging with a range of partners, including those in the community justice sector, to reduce deliberate fires and help improve local outcomes.

When required, we will provide advice, guidance and support to make people and properties more resilient to the risk of fires being set deliberately. Seasonal campaigns during times of known risk such as the bonfire period and the spring and summer months will aim to reduce deliberate secondary fires, and through our youth engagement programmes, such as Angus Fire Academy we will educate young people about the consequences of deliberate fire-setting.

Working with our partners and communities in Angus we will:
- Share relevant information and analyse data, to identify hot spot areas most at risk from deliberate fire-setting.
- Target education, advice and other preventative measures at the hot spot areas identified as being most at risk from deliberate fire-setting.
- Deliver effective engagement programmes and interventions to prevent children and young people becoming involved in deliberate fire-setting.
- Engage with offenders and ex-offenders involved in deliberate fire-setting to educate them of the risks, and to positively influence their behaviour.
- Take positive action to reduce opportunities for deliberate fire-setting at insecure, vacant or derelict buildings.

Progress will be monitored by:
- Reviewing the number, type and locations of deliberate fire-setting incidents within Angus.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of our engagement programmes for reducing deliberate fire-setting.

The local outcomes we aim to improve are:
- The SFRS has the capacity to contribute to a broader range of prevention work.
- Communities in Angus will be safe, secure, vibrant and sustainable.
- Children in Angus will have the best start in life.
- Angus will have an inclusive and sustainable economy.
- An enhanced, protected and enjoyed natural and built environment.

6.   Effective Risk Management and Operational Preparedness

Risk management and operational preparedness is a key area of work for the SFRS. Locally, this means knowing what the risks are in Angus and then making plans, so we are resilient to respond to any event that these risks may bring. Many of the risks we face depend on where people live and work. For example, risks in Angus include the coastline and extensive river network, which could result in shipping and flooding incidents. An accident at an industrial site such as Glaxo, Montrose and a wildfire impacting the natural beauty of the Cairngorm National Park and Angus Glens, are also risks in Angus we need to manage through effective planning and responding.

Other risks in Angus include:
- Critical infrastructure, such as the A90 and A92 that pass-through Angus.
- The port of Montrose and Arbroath harbour, which support fishing, oil and leisure.
- Temporary risks such as music festivals and sports competitions.
- Significant Heritage sites, such as Glamis Castle and Arbroath Abbey.

The national risks Scotland faces are continually changing and as a key public service, we have a statutory duty to prepare for and respond to any significant national threats or major emergencies. These include being able to deal with events such as widespread flooding, major transport accidents, terrorist attacks and natural disasters. As our role broadens, so does the variety of incidents we attend. Developing greater flexibility to deploy crews, to take on a broadening response and prevention role will therefore be fully explored nationally and locally for safe and effective delivery.

Having the resilience to make plans for and respond to the unique risk profile of Angus is essential for managing the effects of any event. For us, that means our firefighters being equipped to deal with emergencies safely and effectively, our stations being in a constant state of readiness; working with our partners to deliver an integrated approach to emergency planning, and helping to build community resilience.

Working with our partners and communities in Angus we will:
- Identify and assess the risk to our community through the process of Operational Intelligence (OI) gathering and active involvement in the Local Resilience Partnership (LRP)
- Implement a training programme that matches the Angus risk profile and maintains out capabilities for dealing with local and national emergencies.
- Undertake targeted RDS firefighter recruitment campaigns, to raise community awareness of the role and its value.
- Strengthen community resilience by engaging with them, to build their capabilities for managing the effects of emergencies as a community.

Progress will be monitored by:
- Reviewing the outcomes of our OI process and engagement with LRPs.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of our firefighter training programme and multi-agency emergency planning.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of our firefighter recruitment campaigns.
- Assessing the number of resilience hubs we engage with to enhance their capacity and capabilities.

The local outcomes we aim to improve are:
- Communities in Angus will be safe, secure, vibrant and sustainable.
- People in Angus will be physically, mentally and emotionally healthy.
- Angus will have an inclusive and sustainable economy.
- An enhanced, protected and enjoyed natural and built environment.

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

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