

2021



LOCAL FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN

WEST LOTHIAN

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Foreword

It is reassuring that a modern and innovative Scottish Fire and Rescue Service have published a new Community Plan that properly recognises the strengths of a highly skilled and experienced public service. The Plan is entirely focussed on delivering real safety benefits to our community by working in partnership and providing professional services in the most efficient and effective way. As chair of Services for the Community, Policy, Development and Scrutiny Panel, I look forward to working with colleagues towards improving safety and well-being for all who live or visit West Lothian.

Councillor George Paul

Chair of West Lothian Services for the Community, Policy, Development & Scrutiny Panel

Introduction

Welcome to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Local Fire and Rescue Plan (the Plan) for the West Lothian Council area. This Plan has been created with a focus on placing our communities at the heart of everything we do, and to improve local outcomes for the people of West Lothian. This plan is the mechanism through which the aims of the Scottish Government's Fire and Rescue Framework 2016, the SFRS's Strategic Plan 2019-22 and the West Lothian Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Local Outcome Improvement (LOIP) Plan 2013-23 are delivered locally to meet the agreed needs of the West Lothian communities.

This Plan has been developed to support the delivery of agreed local outcomes for West Lothian communities, working in partnership with community planning partners to improve community safety, to enhance the well-being of those who live and work in, and/or visit West Lothian, whilst tackling issues of social inequality.

This Plan sets out my priorities and objectives for the SFRS within West Lothian for 2021 and beyond, and allows Local Authority partners to scrutinise the performance outcomes of these priorities. SFRS will continue to work closely with partners in West Lothian in order to ensure that we are all "Working Together for a Safer Scotland" through targeting the risks to our communities at a local level.

As a public service organisation and as a member of the CPP, SFRS recognises that the demographics of our society are changing which will challenge us to continually improve on how we deliver our services to our communities. This Plan will therefore seek to focus on those areas of risk and demand to maximise the potential to work in partnership and by using our capacity flexibly, more effectively and innovatively to ensure we direct our resources to the point of need within our communities to protect those most at risk and harm.

Through our on-going involvement with local community safety groups in West Lothian, we will continue to develop our understanding of local needs and proactively seek out consultation opportunities with all sections of the community. Using this approach, we will ensure that the services we deliver are driven by consultation, in line with public expectations and help to build strong, safe and resilient communities.

This Plan also takes cognisance of the strategic direction of the SFRS Board insofar that the Service needs to transform to meet the changing world around us in terms of threats from terrorism, severe weather events and the need to care for an ageing population in their homes. This changing environment is set against intense budgetary pressures being experienced across the public sector and the ambition to do more to reduce demand on services. Therefore, this Plan has been developed using a flexible approach that permits change and adaptation as required.

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 in order to ensure that it remains relevant and appropriate.

David Sharp
Local Senior Officer
Falkirk and West Lothian

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.



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

Understanding West Lothian and the profile of the community is of vital importance in helping the SFRS to develop this Plan and to identify priorities and objectives to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to access our service and reduce their risk from fire and other hazards.

West Lothian covers a geographical area of approximately 428 square kilometers and is situated between the two main cities in Scotland, Edinburgh and Glasgow. West Lothian has a population of about 183,100, accounting for 3.35% of Scotland's total population, making it the 9th largest local authority area. This Plan has been prepared within the wider context of the West Lothian CPP and sets out the local priorities for delivering Local Fire and Rescue Service priorities for West Lothian. Underpinning this Plan are the key principles of community planning namely; prevention and early intervention; integration of public services around the whole systems approach; transparency, accountability and innovation in our approaches to Fire and Rescue Service provision.

The area has one of the fastest growing and youngest population in the country, with an average age of 39 compared with 41 across Scotland. West Lothian's rate of increase in population from 1991 to 2011 is at 21.55%, the highest of all Scottish local authority areas.

According to the 2011 census, 12.2% of the population of the area are Non- White/Scottish. Since the 2001 census there has been an increase in the minority ethnic population with an emphasis on people coming into the area from Eastern European countries. People from minority or ethnic backgrounds can be more vulnerable due to feeling isolated within communities. This can be for several reasons, including language barriers and cultural differences.

By 2035 the population of West Lothian is projected to be 205,345, an increase of 19.3% compared to the 2010 population. The population aged under 16 is projected to increase by 13.3% over the 25-year period, however the biggest area of growth is in the older population, with growth in people of pensionable age anticipated to be 52% with particular increases in the over 75's. Risk to people is increased when age is combined with other factors, such as living alone and / or in poverty and isolation. Physical and mental health issues associated with aging can also contribute to an increase in risk.

West Lothian's projected population change is different to most other comparator local authorities, and the Scottish average, in that most of this projected change is estimated to be through natural change e.g. the birth rate being higher than the mortality rate.

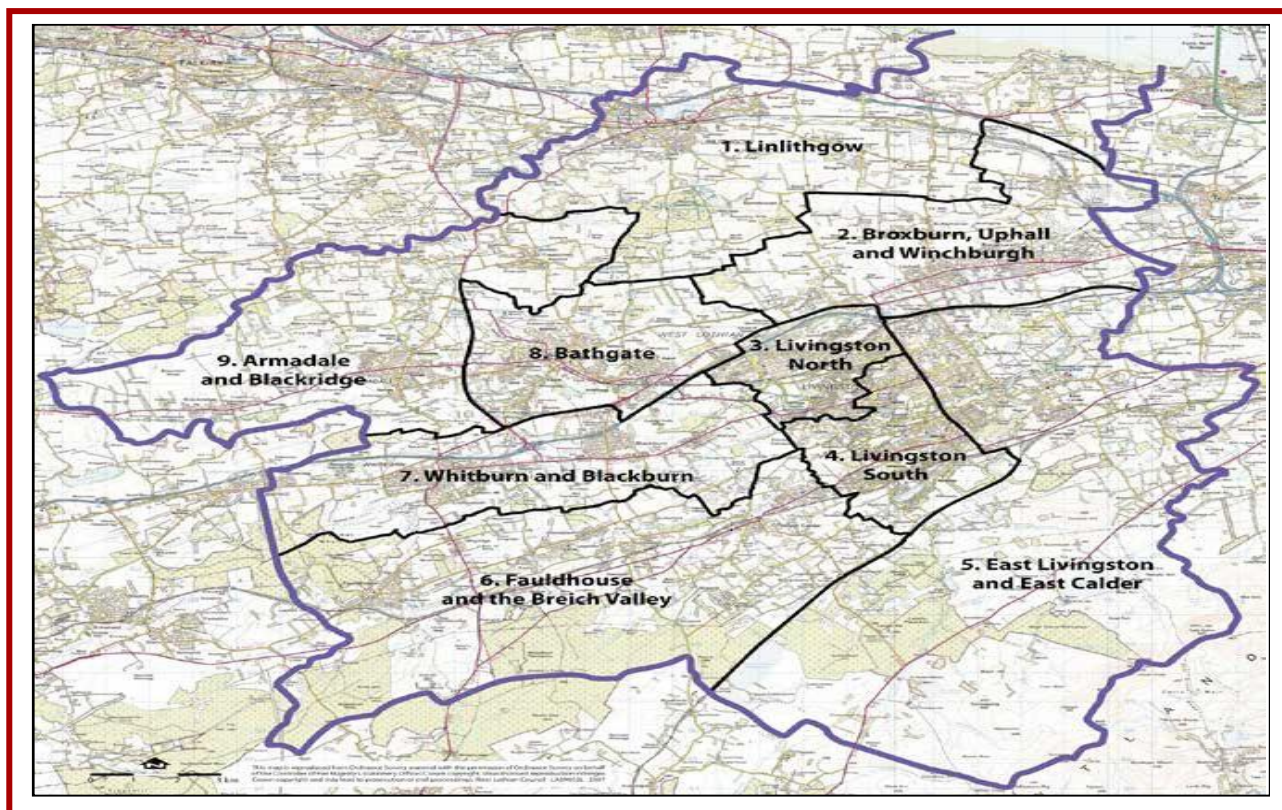
Community Planning Partners put significant emphasis on reducing health inequalities across West Lothian and recognise that inequalities can lead to poorer health and earlier death. There is a correlation between health inequalities such as smoking and alcohol/drugs misuse and the increased vulnerability to the risks of fire.

The number of households in West Lothian is predicted to grow significantly. In 2010, there were around 72,500 households in West Lothian and around 74,500 houses. By 2033 there are expected to be 97,100 households in West Lothian, an increase of around 34%.

The 2016 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) shows that West Lothian is ranked 17th in the share of local authority deprived data zones, with sixteen data zones in the most

deprived 15%. This equated to 7% of all data zones in West Lothian. Historically, it is recognised that there will be an increase in fire related activity in areas of deprivation.

Structure of wards



| Ward Area | Community Fire Station Locations |
|---|---|
| Ward 1 – Linlithgow | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linlithgow |
| Ward 2 – Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broxburn |
| Ward 3 – Livingston North | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Livingston |
| Ward 4 – Livingston South | |
| Ward 5 – East Livingston and East Calder | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> West Calder (Polbeth) |
| Ward 6 – Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whitburn |
| Ward 7 – Whitburn and Blackburn | |
| Ward 8 – Bathgate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bathgate |
| Ward 9 – Armadale and Blackridge | |

Our six Community Fire Stations include two stations at Livingston and Bathgate which are staffed by Wholtime Duty System (WDS) and Retained Duty System (RDS) personnel with a further six stations at Bathgate, Broxburn, West Calder, Whitburn, Livingston and Linlithgow staffed by RDS personnel. Wholtime stations are permanently staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week throughout the year whilst our RDS personnel operate on an “on call” basis and are alerted by pager for emergency calls. Across the six stations we have eight Fire appliances and one specialist Water Rescue vehicle.

Frontline personnel are supported by a team of local training instructors, who provide dedicated support to operational personnel in terms of acquiring new skills, maintaining existing skills and ensuring role competency.

Our local Prevention and Protection (P&P) team consist of Fire Safety Enforcement officers, who deal with legislative matters including the auditing of relevant premises and a Community Action Team, who carry out a community engagement role through a diverse and wide-reaching range of preventative activities. In addition to this, a SFRS Local Authority Liaison Officer acts as a coordinator for engagement activities and liaison with external partners.

An Area Commander, or Local Senior Officer (LSO), has overall responsibility for discharging the functions of the SFRS within West Lothian. Day to day management is devolved to a team of two Group Commanders (GC's) and two Station Commanders (SC's) responsible for Service Delivery. The Senior Management team also consists of a further two SC's who have responsibility for P&P and Training across the LSO area of Falkirk and West Lothian.

Performance Scrutiny

We report to West Lothian's Services for the Community Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel (PDSP) on a quarterly basis.

Local Priorities

1. Local Risk Management and Preparedness

Background:

The SFRS is a key partner within the Resilience Partnership structure in Scotland as a Category 1 Responder, as set out in the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) and Civil Contingencies Act (2004) (Contingency Planning) Regulations (2005). The West Lothian area forms part of the Lothian and Borders Local Resilience Partnership (LBLRP) which supports the East of Scotland Regional Resilience Partnership (EoSRRP). The SFRS works closely with partners including Police Scotland, Scottish Ambulance Service, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, NHS Lothian, MET Office, Maritime and Coastguard Agency, Voluntary Sector and West Lothian Council, to develop and maintain plans based on identified risks across the LBLRP and EoSRRP area.

The SFRS have a statutory duty to reduce the risks to our communities to make certain that they receive the best possible service. The management of risk within our community means:

- Identifying the risks to the community that fall within the specific scope of responsibility of the SFRS
- Undertaking a process to prioritise these risks
- Ensuring that appropriate local and national resource capability are available and trained personnel are in place.

The SFRS is committed to working in partnership with communities, which includes empowering and supporting communities to build community resilience and cohesion. Through this work, we will work with communities to harness their resources and expertise. Examples of this work includes making communities aware of the risks that they face and making simple steps to improve their own safety.

We will achieve it by:

- *Fulfilling our statutory duties in relation to the Civil Contingencies Act*
- *Ensuring all known risk information is obtained, communicated and exercised*
- *Working locally with partner organisations and agencies to ensure effective response plans are developed for identified risks*
- *Ensuring our training, staff development and equipment is fit for purpose to meet our current risk profile and adaptable to changing circumstances*
- *Continually reviewing our response arrangements*
- *Adapting and evolving our response and service delivery models to meet future emerging risks.*

Performance Indicators:

- We will visit high risk premises on a regular basis to ensure our staff are aware of the hazards and risks posed by these premises
- We will participate fully in all multi agency training and exercising events
- We will use internal SFRS reporting systems to monitor the operational competence of our personnel.

Expected Outcomes:

- Keeping members of the public and our staff safe, should any incident occur
- Reducing the financial burden and disruption caused to our communities when emergencies occur
- Improving the wealth and prosperity of our area
- Proactively helping the wider community by preventing emergencies and planning to mitigate their effects when they occur.

2. Domestic Fire Safety

Accidental dwelling fires and associated fire casualties and fatalities have a significant impact on the families affected, as well as the wider community.

Analysis of accidental dwelling fire data identifies cooking as the most common cause of fires within the home, with the most common contributory factor being distracted whilst cooking.

Cigarettes and smoking materials are identified as the primary ignition source in a number of serious injury/fatal fires with alcohol consumption and/or drugs misuse being identified as a contributory factor, which affects the occupant's ability to react appropriately in a fire situation.

In addition, there are direct links to social deprivation, age and mobility with evidence suggesting that elderly members of the community and young people are more likely to be exposed to the risk of fire in the home.

Through our Home Fire Safety Visit programme, community engagement and education activities, we aim to reduce the risk and impact of fire and the associated losses and improve fire safety in domestic premises.

We will achieve reductions by:

- *Active participation in West Lothian Community Planning arrangements and adopting a partnership approach to risk reduction*
- *Sharing information with Health Care, Social Work and relevant partners to help protect the most vulnerable*
- *Developing new partnerships to identify and support at those at most risk groups*
- *Identifying opportunities for engagement with vulnerable members of our community to promote fire safety and good citizenship*
- *Delivery of targeted fire safety related educational programmes and community engagement activities*
- *Carrying out Post Domestic Incident Response following any accidental dwelling fire.*

We will monitor progress against the following targets:

- *We aim to reduce accidental dwelling fires in West Lothian by 3% per year*
- *We aim to reduce accidental dwelling fires fatalities in West Lothian to a level that is as low as reasonably practicable*
- *We aim to reduce accidental dwelling fires casualties in West Lothian by 2% per year.*

In doing so we will also add value by:

- *Promoting confident and safe communities where residents feel positive about where they live*
- *Protecting our citizens*
- *Making our communities safer*
- *Reducing the potential financial burden on society through the education of residents.*

3. Deliberate Fire Setting

Deliberate fire setting is a significant problem for the SFRS and is responsible for a large number of fires that are attended across West Lothian. Whilst some of these incidents occur in buildings, or involve vehicles, the vast majority can be identified as fires involving outdoor refuse/grass/shrub land fires and wheelie bins. SFRS classifies these as 'secondary fires'.

Deliberate secondary fires are a form of anti-social behaviour and by focusing our attention on deliberate fires, this will reduce the demand on the SFRS, the burden upon partners and in turn enhance community wellbeing and reduce negative environmental impact.

Analysis shows that the greatest amount of deliberate fire setting activity takes place in Livingston South and East Livingston and East Calder wards and activity increases significantly each year in April and May, and is at its lowest in December and January.

We will achieve reductions by:

- *Engaging in a multi-agency approach to tackling deliberate fire setting and fire related anti-social behaviour by the targeting resources to areas of demand and high activity*
- *Working with partners to develop new strategies to reduce deliberate fire setting*
- *Delivering youth engagement programmes to reduce anti-social behaviour through diversionary activities and education*
- *Delivering school based programmes to reduce deliberate fire setting*
- *Identifying and developing partnerships with organisations who engage with young people.*

We will monitor progress against the following target:

- *We aim to reduce deliberate fire setting in West Lothian by 5% per year.*

In doing so we will also add value by:

- *Promoting safe and attractive communities in which people want to live*
- *Diverting those persons away from anti-social behaviour by encouraging them to be good citizens*
- *Reducing the adverse effects that deliberate fire setting has on peoples' lives*
Supporting the national focus towards early and effective intervention.

4. Unintentional Harm and Injury

Unintentional harm in the home environment - for example slips, trips, falls and scalds to the very young and old - is now widely recognised as presenting significant issues to the health of the public, as well as the impact these injuries have on our public services.

Analysis shows that our very young and elderly, particularly in more deprived communities, are most at risk of suffering from unintentional harm or injury. Analysis also shows that a number of agencies are often involved with those most vulnerable to these injuries.

Working with our community safety partners, both within West Lothian and across Scotland, SFRS has a significant role to play in contributing towards identifying those at risk, and the risks they are exposed to, and reducing or eliminating those risks, either directly through SFRS intervention, or indirectly through partner interventions.

We will achieve reductions in accidental harm by:

- *Working with our partners to understand the signs and causes of unintentional harm in the home, and educating SFRS personnel to identify these and deliver appropriate interventions*
- *Utilising our Home Safety Visit programme to assess for risk in the home, with a focus on the young and elderly, referring those deemed at risk from harm or injury to partners to provide additional support*
- *Focus resources where demand has been identified and deliver key community safety messages*
- *Work with partners to mitigate the negative outcomes of adverse health issues.*

We will monitor progress by:

- *Reviewing and reporting upon the number of Special Service casualties (excluding RTCs).*

In doing so we will also add value by:

- *Promoting confident and safe communities where citizens feel positive about where they live*
- *Protecting our citizens*
- *Making our communities safer*
- *Reducing the potential financial burden on society through the education of citizens.*

A core part of the SFRS's role is responding to Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs). Firefighters are trained to a high standard and have at their disposal the most modern equipment for extricating people from vehicles involved in a collision and administering first aid to casualties.

Whilst attendance at RTCs is a core role for the SFRS, the primary responsibility for road safety lies with Transport Scotland, Police Scotland and local authorities. The SFRS has a crucial role in supporting these organisations at a local level. This includes providing access to hard-hitting education programmes aimed at the most at-risk groups, to highlight the consequences of dangerous driving and RTCs.

National statistics identify that the most at-risk group is young drivers who are targeted through the multi-agency educational programme. This is aimed at fourth year secondary school pupils and supports Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2020 'Go Safe'.

We will achieve reductions by:

- *Continuing our involvement in multi-agency educational programmes, particularly aimed at high risk groups within our communities*
- *Developing innovative ways of delivering the road safety agenda in collaboration with*

- partners*
- *Working with our partners within West Lothian to ensure that all agencies can map road incident hotspots.*

We will monitor progress against the following target:

- *We aim to reduce fatalities and casualties from Road Traffic Collisions in West Lothian by 2% per year.*

In doing so we will also add value by:

- *Protecting our citizens*
- *Making our communities safer*
- *Reducing the number of hospital admissions, and the associated costs to the NHS and other organisations due to RTC related injuries*
- *Encouraging young drivers and other groups to be responsible road users through active engagement and education.*

5. Non- Domestic Fire Safety

All fires in workplaces and business premises are classed as Non-Domestic Fires and come under the scope of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005.

Fire Safety Enforcement Officers carry out audits to ensure statutory responsibilities are met and provide advice to businesses on fire safety. The types of premises encompassed by the Act can be wide-ranging and include industrial, commercial and those premises providing sleeping accommodation, such as residential care premises.

We proactively work as part of a partnership, with local industry to ensure that Businesses Continuity Planning and Emergency Preparedness Arrangements are appropriate, to ensure we can mitigate the impact of fires and other emergencies on business and that we are prepared to respond to adverse safety events.

In addition to industrial, commercial and sleeping/care premises, a number of non-domestic premises types linked to domestic premises (e.g. garages, sheds and huts) can be at risk from fire. During our engagement with home owners we can raise awareness of this type of incident and offer fire safety information to mitigate risk in their types of property.

We will achieve reductions by:

- *Using a risk based approach to audit business and commercial premises by Fire Safety Enforcement Officers*
- *Working with the West Lothian Council licensing department to ensure all multiple occupation houses comply with the required standards in relation to Fire Safety*
- *Consulting with West Lothian Council Building Standards Officers and architects*
- *Carrying out Post Fire Audits following any fire within relevant premises*
- *Engaging in a multi-agency approach to tackling Non- Domestic Fires*
- *Delivering youth engagement programmes to reduce anti-social behaviour through diversionary activities and education*
- *Delivering school based programmes to reduce deliberate fire setting*
- *Identifying and developing partnerships with organisations who engage with young*

people.

We will monitor progress against the following target:

- *We aim to reduce fires in Non-Domestic Premises in West Lothian by 3% per year.*

In doing so we will also add value by:

- *Improving the wealth and prosperity in our area*
- *Improving the quality of our infrastructure and promoting the growth of our local economy*
- *Safeguarding the wellbeing of residents and employees within relevant premises*
- *Supporting business continuity and employment within our area.*

6. False Alarms (including Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals)

Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) are those occasions when an automated fire alarm system activates and results in the mobilisation of SFRS resources, when the reason for that alarm turns out to be something other than a fire. UFAS are categorised into three categories: False Alarm Good Intent, False Alarm Malicious or False Alarm Equipment Failure.

Within West Lothian, UFAS incidents in non-domestic properties account for a large number of the total incidents attended. UFAS has a negative impact on the SFRS through the deployment of resources to incidents where lifesaving services are not required. This negative impact is also experienced by businesses through loss of production, business continuity or service delivery. Attendance at UFAS creates a negative financial burden upon SFRS as well as increasing the road risk and environmental impact within West Lothian.

We will achieve reductions in Unwanted Fire Alarm Systems by:

- *Working with Duty Holders to reduce occurrences of UFAS*
- *Implement intervention systems such as staff alarm response or technical interventions including changes to the detector type, or double activation systems where required*
- *Where required, implement the SFRS policy on UFAS, and reduce the operational response to premises which continue to have UFAS incidents*
- *Identify premises which attract a significant operational response, and re-assess the response required.*

We will monitor progress against the following target:

- *We aim to reduce Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals in West Lothian by 5% per year.*

In doing so we will also add value by:

- *Protecting our citizens*
- *Making our communities safer*
- *Improving the wealth and prosperity in our area*
- *Reducing the negative impact of UFAS on local business.*

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 the feedback that 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'd like to share with us or you would like more information, you can get in touch in a number of ways:

Write to: Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Falkirk and West Lothian LSO Area HQ
Westfield
Falkirk
FK29AH

Phone: 01324 610500

Visit our website: www.firescotland.gov.uk

Follow us on Twitter: @fire_scot : and @scotfire_FikWL

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