

THE HIGHLAND AND ISLANDS FIRE BOARD

10 September 2009

DRAFT FIRE AND RESCUE FRAMEWORK FOR SCOTLAND 2009 CONSULTATION

Report by Chief Fire Officer

Agenda Item	
Report No	

Summary

The purpose of this report is to inform members of the Draft Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2009 document and to request their support for the response prepared on behalf of the Board.

Background

The first Framework was published in October 2005. Under the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 the Minister is required to review the Framework and ensure that it reflects the priorities, objectives and guidance required by fire and rescue authorities in connection with discharging their statutory duties.

In accordance with the principles of the Concordat that sets out the new relationship between central and local government, this draft Framework was developed by the Scottish Government in full partnership with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA).

The consultation framework document is attached (Appendix 1) and is available on-line at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/06/19102633/0>.

Consultation

The closing date for responses to the consultation is the 20th of September 2009 and Board approval is sought to submit the attached letter from the Service (Appendix 2) in order to meet the timescales set out in the formal process.

The Framework was drafted in both the spirit and intent of the Concordat and does not seek to 'micro manage' local government services. It recognises that fire and rescue services are local services, locally delivered through local integrated risk management plans to meet local needs. It further recognises the part that fire and rescue services play in securing our national resilience.

The Framework emphasises the challenging public sector funding context and the need to ensure Best Value. It sets a high level direction of travel for fire and rescue services that supports the agreed national objectives and strategic national priorities. The document is constructed to enhance fire and rescue services current contributions to local community planning partnerships and single outcome agreements.

Financial Implications

As no new burdens are implicit in the Framework there are no additional financial or resource burdens arising directly from it.

Recommendation

Members are requested to note the publication of the Draft Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2009 document and approve the response from the Service on behalf of the Board.

**BRIAN A MURRAY
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

31 August 2009

**DRAFT FIRE AND RESCUE
FRAMEWORK FOR SCOTLAND 2009**

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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DRAFT FIRE AND RESCUE FRAMEWORK FOR SCOTLAND 2009

INTRODUCTION

1 This is the second Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland. The first, published in 2005, as a requirement of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005, set out the strategic priorities, objectives and guidance for Fire and Rescue Authorities. Much has changed since then. Most significantly, a new partnership approach has developed between local and national government, the principles of which are now described in the concordat¹ between Scottish Ministers and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) which this Framework supports. Together with the National Performance Framework², this new Fire Framework helps to bring into focus the major challenges facing Scotland's Fire and Rescue Services.

2. The concordat offers a renewed opportunity for national and local Government to work together in the development of Scotland's Fire and Rescue Services (the SFRS) and enables them to continue to adopt a broader focus when considering their wider community partnership contribution. This revised Framework is focused on supporting this new partnership approach. However, our approach must not be at the expense of weakening the SFRS core responsibilities to the public. The key priorities for the SFRS remain the same – reducing the number of fire-related deaths and injuries, including those of firefighters in the course of their duties; reducing the economic effects of fire, including the number of accidental dwelling house fires; reducing the number of malicious calls received; and reducing death and injuries caused by road traffic collisions.

While Scottish Ministers are required by statute to set out their expectations for the SFRS, this Framework and the wider concordat approach also recognise that Fire and Rescue Authorities are, quite rightly, accountable to their communities for the provision of the service locally. Effective Community Planning Partnerships will therefore be key to the delivery of successful outcomes, and there are a number of areas in which we can contribute collectively. The key objectives outlined in this document are:

- The need to examine the efficient use of resources within the context of Best Value
- The need to seek continuous improvement, while balancing quality and cost considerations
- The need to develop a joint approach to shared services
- The continuing need to support the “up-skilling” of the workforce
- The need for a longer-term approach to capital funding
- The need for a refreshed approach to performance measurement, public reporting and self assessment.

4. This new approach to agreeing what matters most in delivering those services is driven by a desire to ensure our communities are safer and stronger. Key to achieving this outcome is the mutual respect and trust which already exists between

¹ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/11/13092240/concordat>

² <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/11/13092240/9>

the concordat partners and which has been further enhanced by the consultative approach Scottish Ministers have taken to the development of this Framework.

5. The SFRS are local services, locally delivered to meet local needs. They also play an integral part in securing our national resilience. In doing so, they make an important and significant contribution to Scotland's economic and social objectives, both nationally and locally. This framework is intended to strengthen this vision for the SFRS, and helpfully defines the roles and responsibilities of all those responsible for delivering Scotland's Fire and Rescue Services.

6. In summary, this revised Framework:

- Recognises the wide range of views held by those involved in managing and delivering Scotland's Fire and Rescue Services and supports the partnership approach which underpins ongoing and future success.
- Offers a shared perspective on the key challenges facing the SFRS.
- Outlines joint outcomes which will assist Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) and their Community Partners in planning and delivering successful services to their communities.
- Provides clarity over the roles and responsibilities of all those responsible for delivering Scotland's Fire and Rescue Services.
- Describes how the work of the SFRS contributes to the wider overriding purpose of the Scottish Government, to "focus our resources on creating a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing economic sustainable growth".

CHAPTER 1

Summary of Aims and Aspirations

1. The overall aims of this Framework are to:
 - Set out Scottish Ministers aspirations for the SFRS.
 - Set current fire legislation in the context of the new relationship between key partners and the wider concordat.
 - Provide a strategic direction for the Service over the medium-term.
 - Provide clarity for the public and all those involved in delivering the SFRS of the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders.
 - Provide clarity over the governance and accountability arrangements which exist for the SFRS.

2. Our Aspirations
 - Fire and Rescue Services that work proactively and in partnership across the public, private and voluntary sectors, maximising their contribution to national priorities and objectives, with a particular emphasis on delivering a safer, stronger and more resilient Scotland.
 - A Scotland which is free of all preventable fire-related deaths, injuries and damage.
 - A Scotland which is prepared to respond to major emergencies – with the SFRS ready to play their part through planning and exercising with the Scottish Government and responder agencies with a clear view of the risks likely to be met.
 - Fire and Rescue Services which are highly skilled and demonstrate Best Value in all their activities.
 - Fire and Rescue Services which are an integral part of an inclusive Scotland where everyone has the opportunity to contribute to public life.
 - Fire and Rescue Services which deliver protective and emergency services that consider the needs of and strive to establish a workforce which is representative of Scotland’s communities.

The Wider Context

3. While the Scottish Government continues to set strategic direction and national outcomes, including the priorities for the SFRS set out in this Framework, we are committed to stepping back from micro-management as part of the concordat approach. This means that the decisions and responsibility for how to deliver agreed outcomes are fully delegated to a local level. Scottish Ministers will not manage the “actions” or make decisions concerning the delivery of those outcomes - unless they have a particular and direct statutory duty which requires them to do so.

4. This commitment to no “micro management” recognises that delivery will not necessarily be standardised across Scotland and that local services should have an increased flexibility to respond to local needs, rather than necessarily adopt a ‘one size fits all’ approach.

5. It is also a commitment to limit the bureaucratic burdens placed upon local authorities and related services, in order to enable them to more effectively deliver outcomes. This principle extends to monitoring the performance of these services.

6. This wider context to the Framework can be summarised as follows:

- As Fire and Rescue Service matters are devolved, Scottish Ministers are accountable to Parliament for those matters and for the efficient use of public funds.
- Ministers' accountability is set in the context of the new relationships and wider concordat.
- An emphasis on partnership and mutual respect among all those with a stake in the SFRS, including employee representative organisations.
- A Fire and Rescue Framework which provides a clear strategic direction.
- All stakeholders working within the context of the same National Performance Framework.
- An assumption that revenue funding for the SFRS is provided on a "non-ringfenced" basis, as part of general resources for local government, and a commitment to develop a longer-term capital investment strategy.

Roles and Responsibilities

7. With this wider context in mind, the following section helpfully defines the roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders responsible for delivering Scotland's Fire and Rescue Services.

7.1 SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

7.1.1 General

- To set national standards, in partnership with stakeholders, where after consultation Ministers deem these to be necessary, and to monitor application of these standards.
- To initiate, promote and monitor legislation.
- To set a strategic direction for Scotland's Fire and Rescue Services, which builds on the National Performance Framework and is delivered in consultation with key stakeholders.
- To lead, in collaboration with those jointly responsible for policy setting and service delivery, those areas of policy where a national pan- Scotland strategy is required to deliver the most effective and efficient service, in the interests of communities and the country as a whole.

7.1.2 **Learning and Development**

- To set, in partnership with stakeholders, national standards for training, learning and development and arrangements for quality assurance.
- To enable the Scottish Fire Services College, as a key stakeholder, to act in a central supporting role to the Service, by providing and procuring agreed quality assured training and development opportunities.
- To support the continued upskilling of the workforce via a dedicated Learning & Development Team and e-learning platforms, including a national personal development record system.
- To work in partnership with stakeholders on the development of a long-term plan for strategic investment in training facilities across Scotland, taking into account overall affordability and training needs.

7.1.3 **Resilience**

- In line with the Scottish Ministers' assessment of risk, to ensure, in partnership and by providing appropriate support, that the Service can respond collectively in the event of a major incident arising particularly from terrorism, especially a Chemical, Biological Radiological Nuclear and Explosives attack, or extreme weather, and that national contingency plans are in place for providing emergency fire cover in the event of a major disruptive event.

7.1.4 **Scottish Fire and Rescue Advisory Unit (SFRAU)**

- To provide advice within the Scottish Government on Fire and Rescue matters.
- To support the development and implementation of strategic direction, standards and national good practice.
- To ensure compatibility with UK guidance where appropriate.
- To develop processes for the assessment of SFRS' operational preparedness.
- To support the process of continuous improvement in the SFRS.
- The Head of the Unit will also provide separate, independent advice to Ministers if he or she judges that this is necessary, or if Ministers request such advice.

7.2 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

- To implement the requirements of the Local Government Scotland Act, particularly in relation to Best Value.
- To establish Single Outcome Agreements through Community Planning Partnerships.
- To allocate non-ringfenced Local Government funding.

7.2.1 **COSLA**

- To represent the interests of the local government family, including those of Fire and Rescue Authorities.
- To work with the Scottish Government to deliver the concordat through the National Performance Framework, Single Outcome Agreements and joint policy development.
- To negotiate the overall funding package for local government with the Scottish Government.
- To coordinate efforts to deliver shared agendas which cross policy portfolios or identified boundaries be they local or regional.
- To coordinate efforts to deliver shared agendas.
- To address all issues relevant to the NJCs.

7.2.2 **Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs)**

- To make provision for the delivery of their statutory responsibilities. Key legislative provisions are contained within the Fire Scotland Act, Civil Contingencies Act, Additional Functions Order, Local Government Scotland Act (Best Value and Community Planning duties), Health and Safety and Equalities legislation.
- To appoint the Chief Officer.
- To provide the Service with political leadership, ensure local accountability, budget setting, as well as monitoring and scrutiny. e.g. Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP).
- To engage with Scottish Government, COSLA and Community Planning Partnerships to develop a strategic direction for the Service at a national and local level and in-keeping with the National Performance Framework.
- Ensure efficient, effective and economic delivery of local Fire and Rescue Services demonstrating value for money.
- Scrutiny of performance monitoring.
- Responsibility for local risk reduction strategies (IRMP) in line with Scottish Government guidance.

7.2.3 **Chief Officers**

- Responsible to FRAs for discharging their statutory duties as delegated by the FRA.
- To deliver the provisions contained in legislation as directed by FRAs.
- To work in partnership with the Scottish Government, COSLA and, the FRAs to set the strategic direction for the Service in keeping with the National Performance Framework at both a national and local level.
- To work with Community Planning Partnerships in the development and delivery of Single Outcome Agreements.
- Local delivery and management of Fire and Rescue Services on behalf of the FRA.

7.2.4 **Employee Representative Bodies**

- To represent the views and best interests of their members.
- To engage with the Scottish Government, COSLA, FRAs and Chief Officers as key stakeholders in the SFRS in order to jointly progress local and national priorities in line with the National Performance Framework.
- To engage on employment related matters.

7.3 **MINISTERIAL ADVISORY GROUP (MAG)**

7.3.1 The MAG is chaired by the Scottish Minister with responsibility for Fire and Rescue Service matters. All relevant stakeholders are members. This presently includes Scottish Government, COSLA, Fire Conveners Forum, Chief Fire Officers Association, and all related employee representative bodies. The MAG meets at least twice a year. Its remit is:

- To scope and consider major issues which will impact upon the SFRS and consider what action needs to be taken collectively.
- To identify and consider major issues relating to the SFRS which may benefit from Ministerial attention, either through legislation, guidance, or influence.
- To consider relevant quantitative and qualitative evidence and monitor the progress of major issues affecting Scotland's Fire and Rescue Services, suggesting areas where new approaches may be required.
- MAG sub-groups may be convened to take forward key tasks.

CHAPTER 2

1. The first chapter described the roles and responsibilities of each of the key stakeholders responsible for managing and delivering the SFRS. This chapter illustrates how the work of these stakeholders contributes to the wider purpose of the Scottish Government, to "focus our resources on creating a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing economic sustainable growth".

2. The Government's purpose, introduced by The Economic Strategy³ in November 2007, is underpinned by five strategic objectives - to make Scotland **wealthier & fairer, smarter, healthier, safer & stronger, and greener**. In many ways, the SFRS make a contribution across all five of these strategic objectives, although their core contribution is in making our communities safer and stronger.

Our Strategy

3. While all 15 National Outcomes are integral to overall success, the following two clearly encapsulate and underpin the contribution we all make to achieving a safer and stronger Scotland.

- **National Outcome 9:** "We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger."
- **National Outcome 11:** "We have strong resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others."

4. Underpinning this approach are the following key principles:

- We will build on our partnerships and strengthen our relationships to achieve shared outcomes.
- We will engage with our communities in a meaningful way in the development of national and local strategies and keep them informed of progress.
- We will communicate as partners to ensure that positive, coordinated, evidence-based messages are shared with the public.

5. Taken together, these outcomes and related principles are intended to assist FRAs in relation to their Community Planning role and their wider contribution to the development and delivery of Single Outcome Agreements – helping to improve outcomes for their citizens in a way that reflects local circumstances and priorities.

6. This framework is intended to renew the focus on collaboration and innovation, enabling all partners to improve the quality of life of our citizens, by creating safer communities. This chapter describes the key priorities and objectives which COSLA, FRAs and the Scottish Government will commit to addressing in order to ensure that the service is better placed to deliver the agreed outcomes. These priorities are:

³ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/11/12115041/0>

- The developing political and financial environment which may require further changes in our partnership approach.
- The ongoing economic downturn and the need for an innovative and flexible response from all partners.
- The need for a longer-term capital investment strategy for the Service.
- A renewed focus on the longer-term learning and development needs of the Service.
- The need to deliver Best Value and to look again at the associated issue of shared services and opportunities for implementing partnership approaches with other service providers.
- Developing a better and more effective approach to performance management.

7. Scotland, like the rest of the world, is experiencing an ongoing period of economic challenge and FRAs must face this downturn by working together and with their community partners to examine the efficient use of resources within the context of Best Value.

8. Best Value arrangements exist to secure continuous improvement in the performance of functions of public service organisations. FRAs should continue to deliver continuous improvement and to balance quality and cost considerations, while simultaneously ensuring good governance and accountability for local communities.

9. As part of the Community Planning Partnership, FRAs are committed to the agreements made in Single Outcome Agreements, and will use these to work towards improving national outcomes for local people in a way that best reflects local circumstances and priorities.

10. National Outcome 15 states that "our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs". It is important therefore for Scottish Government and COSLA to work together with our key stakeholders and the Improvement Service in developing a joint approach to shared services. We will support FRAs in identifying shared services opportunities and will work collaboratively with stakeholders to develop approaches to strengthening efficient and effective Fire and Rescue Services.

11. In addressing the learning and development needs of the SFRS, the Scottish Fire Services College (SFSC) continues to play a central supporting role. Working in partnership with the SFRS through the auspices of the established Workforce Development Group, the SFSC provides and procures agreed quality assured training and development opportunities. The SFRS will use the SFSC's resources to support the continued "up-skilling" of the workforce via a dedicated Learning and Development team and e-learning platforms. In the longer-term, the Scottish Government has agreed to review the SFRS' wider training requirements in consultation with the SFRS and its stakeholders.

12. The SFRS will continue to have national and local capital funding requirements. The Scottish Government will work with COSLA and FRAs to identify those needs and will support the development of a longer-term approach to capital funding during 2009, which will inform the next Spending Review process.

Sustaining improvements in the SFRS is a key challenge. The Scottish Government is committed to reducing the overall scrutiny burden and to strengthening performance management systems. As an integral part of the wider reform agenda, a refreshed approach to performance measurement, public reporting and self assessment is needed so that the SFRS can fully focus on improvement. SFRAU will lead the Scottish Government's input to this work, helping to deliver a workable performance framework which fits with Best Value 2 principles by March 2010.

13. In overall performance terms, there are a number of key areas in which Scottish Ministers expect the SFRS to make a meaningful contribution. These include quantitative outcomes which the Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) will review each time they meet, including:

- Reducing the number of accidental dwelling house fires;
- Reducing the number of fire-related deaths and injuries, including alcohol-related fire fatalities;
- Reducing the number of deaths and injuries to firefighters in the course of their duty.
- Reducing the destructive economic effects of fire;
- Reducing the number of malicious calls received; and
- Reducing death and injuries caused by road traffic collisions.

14. In line with National outcomes 9 and 11, the Scottish Government will also continue to focus on the causes of fire through preventative work. This will require an effective cross-departmental approach within national Government and increased co-operation between partner agencies and local government. The Scottish Government undertakes to work across all departmental specialisms and Directorates, especially Health, Education and Justice, to ensure that the policy pathways are joined-up and well understood by all partners.

Conclusion

15. To better understand how we expect the Scottish Government, COSLA and their respective partners to approach the priorities and outcomes highlighted in this Framework, we have illustrated some key challenges. For convenience they are outlined in five main subject areas: Community Safety; Workforce; Resilience and Intervention; and Managing the Service. Taken together, these activities support the Government's 15 national outcomes.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

1. As a reflection of our continuously evolving society, the SFRS role is also changing. Community safety encompasses much more than protection against fire and fire damage. The Scottish Government is committed to working with our partners to focus on helping to prevent road traffic collisions and on tackling areas of social deprivation, through multi-agency working, to reduce risk, improve community well being and help ensure that children, young people, families and other people identified as being vulnerable or at risk have a stronger and safer future.

Fire Deaths and Injury

2. Despite an overall downward trend in the number of fire deaths over the last few years, there was an increase in 2007 - 2008. This is an unacceptable change and one which is a collective priority.

3. The Scottish Government believes that this important issue needs increased and collective emphasis. In an example of good collaborative practice, Scottish Ministers commissioned a study, in partnership with COSLA and the SFRS, to examine the reasons behind the statistics. Just as Fire and Rescue Services contribute to the wider agenda of community safety, so too should the wider Community Planning Partnership contribute to tackling issues such as fire deaths and injuries in Scotland. We expect the SFRS to fully support the action plan which emerges from this study.

Supporting Local Economies

4. In the context of the downturn in the economy, supporting Scotland's small to medium-sized businesses is an increasing priority. As part of our contribution to protecting this vital area of the economy, the Scottish Government will continue to work together with COSLA and FRAs to ensure business safety. For example, we have been working collectively with Scotland's tourism industry to review and produce new draft guidance on fire safety in Scotland's economically important bed and breakfast sector, and are committed to ensuring there is an appropriate balance between protection, legislative compliance and economic resilience. The Scottish Government expects the SFRS to implement this new guidance in a measured and proportionate way when it is published around Spring 2010.

Anti Social Behaviour and Community Confidence

5. It is widely acknowledged that Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) has a very negative impact on community well-being, Scotland's economy generally and the work of the SFRS in particular. The SFRS are working closely with young people and other target groups on a wide range of initiatives designed to engage directly with issues that affect their communities. The Scottish Government is committed to working with the SFRS to ensure that such interventions continue to discourage fire-setting behaviour and, importantly, to help citizens understand the dangers of such behaviour and its consequences.

6. Accordingly, there must be a continuing and systematic emphasis on the importance of community safety education and awareness strategies including, where evidence demonstrates best value, youth engagement, restorative justice schemes and initiatives to reduce anti social behaviour. . The Scottish Government is committed to reviewing our strategy for community fire safety during the lifetime of this framework. This work will be taken forward in partnership with COSLA and FRAs.

Joined-up Approach

7. Local Government, through Community Planning Partnerships, recognises the need to address most issues in a joined up and collective way, if they are to make real and sustainable change. It is essential that national Government actively pursues this approach alongside its local partners.

8. Together, we are focused on tackling areas of social deprivation through multi-agency working, to reduce risk, improve community well being and help ensure that children, young people, families and other people identified as being vulnerable or at risk have a stronger and safer future.

WORKFORCE

1. A highly skilled workforce is an essential component of a well developed and modern fit-for-purpose public service. The Scottish Government recognises and values all of the staff, regardless of their role, who play a part in maintaining and continuously improving Scotland's Fire and Rescue Services and achieving its overarching responsibilities. We acknowledge that issues such as training, health, safety, welfare and standards of occupational health, will continue to play a vital part in the development of an excellent workforce in Scotland.

Leadership

2. The Scottish Government recognises the importance of strong political, organisational and operational leadership to deliver the challenges of change management and continuous improvement of the services. We are committed to planning for, and supporting the development of future leaders for Scotland's Fire and Rescue Services. The active development of leaders and leadership is therefore an essential part of workforce planning.

Learning, development and workforce planning

3. We are committed to providing the high quality training and support for our current and future workforce to make sure that it is equipped to fulfil its obligations to the highest standards. The Scottish Government will work with stakeholders to agree the long term training needs of the Service and develop a plan for the necessary strategic investment in our training facilities, taking account of Best Value principles.

4. Over the next few years we will need to plan appropriately for the projected retirement of increased numbers of (mostly wholetime) operational staff from the service. This will have potentially a considerable impact upon the capacity of the service to fulfil its functions and may create specific skills gaps. In this context, it is crucial for all stakeholders to focus on business continuity and succession planning.

Fairness, Equality and Diversity

5. FRAs must also meet their equalities duties and strive to create a workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities they serve. New patterns of migration, our changing demographic structure and changing expectations of customer service mean that equality and diversity matters remain significantly important for all of us. There is more reason than ever to ensure that development of an equalities framework, which links with an FRA's performance management framework, is in place to allow FRAs to identify progress in promoting equalities. While this is a matter for local government, Scottish Ministers are aware that the Improvement Service is developing a Scottish Equalities Framework which could be used for this purpose and actively encourage the SFRS to consider this model.

Firefighters on Retained Duty System (RDS)

6. Scotland is heavily reliant on firefighters in the Retained Duty System to protect our communities, particularly those in remote, island and rural areas.

7. Changing societal norms mean that duty systems developed over the last century do not necessarily meet the needs of 21st century families and communities. Scotland's Fire and Rescue Services therefore need to continue to monitor recruitment and retention in this crucial area of service delivery and develop initiatives to recruit and retain future generations of firefighters in RDS. Likewise, the Scottish Government will work with the SFRS to review the need for related national guidance.

RESILIENCE AND INTERVENTION

1. Eight years after the tragic events of the 11th September 2001, and the more recent events at Glasgow airport, it continues to be essential for Scotland's communities to remain resilient against the key national risks we must now face. The SFRS plays an important role in providing an appropriate and collective response to these issues.
2. Our national resilience will be secured through a combination of both local and national measures and we are committed to work together to deliver a Resilience Strategy and the associated operational response.
3. To date, work enhancing SFRS' resilience has focused on 3 areas: Firelink, control room resilience and the development of a collective response in the event of a major incident arising particularly from terrorism, especially a Chemical, Biological Radiological Nuclear and Explosives attack, or extreme weather.
4. A review of existing resilience capabilities, highlighted through the Resilience Strategy, has been initiated and will be undertaken by CFOA(S) in partnership with the Scottish Government and COSLA. This work aims to provide an assessment of the current state of Fire and Rescue Service capability, and facilitate in the identification of process gaps. It is also envisaged through this programme that an effective assurance process will be developed and agreed between SFRAU and CFOA(S), which will enable SFRAU to assess at regular intervals the total level of resilience capability.

Communication systems

5. The Scottish Government are working with the SFRS to deliver a highly resilient communications system for the services, called Firelink. The new equipment will replace a patchwork of legacy radio systems with a new single, digital, wide-area radio communication system. This will enable firefighters to communicate across Fire and Rescue Service boundaries within Great Britain and to other "blue light" services.
6. Firelink will also support and enhance the SFRS in the delivery of their normal day to day responsibilities as well as empowering the SFRS to undertake the more effective deployment and management of front line resources. Rollout of Firelink is well underway and it is anticipated that the network will be fully operational in Scotland by mid 2010.

Control Room Resilience

7. Following a wide-ranging review of Scotland's emergency preparedness in 2006, Scottish Ministers decided not to take any central action to reduce the number of Fire Control Rooms. Instead, we have agreed to work with the SFRS to ensure that our existing Fire Service Controls are capable of responding to evolving threats and are operating to a minimum standard of resilience. Scottish Ministers intend to allow Firelink to rollout completely before initiating any new work in control rooms.

Water rescue

8. Issues around clarity and responsibility relating to the role of the SFRS in respect of water rescue have been discussed by the Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) in the past. It is accepted that multi-agency guidance on responding to and co-ordinating flooding incidents needs to be improved, particularly in relation to roles and responsibilities. A review into Scotland's water rescue capability was announced by Scottish Ministers on 12 May 2009. The review will be led by Paddy Tomkins, QPM, former Chief Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland. Mr Tomkins will work with a range of stakeholders and report to Ministers with recommendations by December 2009.

Intervention

9. While FRAs should continue to place greater emphasis on preventing fires from happening, the need to respond swiftly and professionally to those incidents that do occur is not diminished. The Services continue to play an integral role in ensuring the safety of our communities by extinguishing fires, responding to road traffic accidents and other major non-road transport incidents, as well as their wider resilience responsibilities. Developing capacity and ensuring that responses to incidents remain effective is key to future success. The review of IRMP being carried out by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Advisory Unit (SFRAU) during 2009 (the section on 'Managing the Service' contains further details) will encompass some of the key intervention challenges facing the SFRS, including: effective utilisation of resources, the importance of incident management, mutual assistance and fire investigation.

MANAGING THE SERVICE

Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP)

1. Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) is a holistic and flexible process. It is supported by robust and wide-ranging data, legislation and guidance aimed at the provision of risk reduction strategies and tactics to identify, measure and mitigate the social and economic impact that fire and other emergencies can be expected to have on all sections of society - including individuals, communities, commerce, industry, the environment and heritage, both built and natural.
2. A great deal has been achieved since the introduction of Integrated Risk Management Planning over three years ago. It is now time to review the guidance to ensure that IRMP continues to provide the effective strategic direction required to inform the effective management of the SFRS. This review is being carried out on behalf of Scottish Ministers by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Advisory Unit (SFRAU) during 2009.
3. Research and development contributes greatly to the area of Risk Management Planning, and in line with our overall approach, the Scottish Government will work together with the SFRS and other key stakeholders on Research and Development into operational tactics and equipment.

Best Value

4. Best Value is a key corporate level assessment tool and Audit Scotland, on behalf of the Accounts Commission, is the principle external scrutiny body for carrying out financial and performance audits of FRAs. The Scottish Government will work with Audit Scotland and COSLA so that external scrutiny remains proportionate to risk and supports FRAs in promoting continuous improvement. National and local government will support the SFRS in continuing to implement and improve upon its Best Value obligations.
5. SFRAU, in partnership with Audit Scotland, will further support this scrutiny activity through its statutory role in supporting Ministers and specifically, identifying and sharing operational best practice.
6. Elected members engagement and skills in scrutinising performance and promoting improvement are key to delivering Best Value. COSLA and SFRAU will develop this support in partnership with the Improvement Service in the context of the development of a continuous professional development (CPD) framework for elected members.
7. Continuous improvement in performance is part of the Best Value duty and will support the contribution made by Fire and Rescue Authorities to achieving the outcomes set out in the National Performance Framework and, more particularly, their contribution to the development of Single Outcome Agreements. The Scottish Government and COSLA will work with the SFRS to explore and develop effective performance management systems, streamlined and improved scrutiny frameworks and a drive for shared services.

8. In support of Best Value principles, it is also desirable to ensure that there is compatibility and interoperability of approaches to incident management and related activity.

Performance Management

9. We know from recent Audit Scotland evidence that performance management generally needs to improve and challenges exist in relation to evaluating the impact and cost-effectiveness of different approaches to community safety work and demonstrating that efficiency savings are being delivered.

10. Performance management is an essential part of delivering Best Value for the people of Scotland. The Scottish Government and COSLA aim to place a far greater focus on what works in relation to continuous improvement in performance by encouraging a robust performance management and self – evaluation framework driven by elected members.

11. Together, we are committed to a refreshed approach to performance management, public reporting and self assessment, so that the SFRS can fully focus on improvement. We are also committed to learning from the approaches to performance management developed within the public sector over the last few years, and to implementing identified best practice.

12. With this in mind, the Scottish Government will work together with COSLA and our partners to ensure that Scotland has a coherent national approach to collecting and reporting performance data at the same time as recognising the need to reduce the scrutiny burden.

Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
APFO	Association of Principal Fire Officers
ASB	Anti Social Behaviour
CFO	Chief Fire Officer
CFOAS	Chief Fire Officers Association, Scotland
COSLA	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
CPP	Community Planning Partnerships
FBU	Fire Brigades Union
Firelink	Resilient communications system for Fire and Rescue Services, Police and ambulance.
FOA	Fire Officers Association
FRA	Fire and Rescue Authority
FRS	Fire and Rescue Services
IRMP	Integrated Risk Management Plan
MAG	Ministerial Advisory Group
NJC	National Joint Council
RDS	Retained Duty System
RFU	Retained Firefighters Union
SFCF	Scottish Fire Convenors Forum
SFRAU	Scottish Fire and Rescue Advisory Unit
The SFRS	Scotland's Fire and Rescue Services
SFSC	Scottish Fire Services College
SG	Scottish Government
SOA	Single Outcome Agreement

Annex of Partners and Key Stakeholders (in alphabetical order)

Stakeholder / Partner	Address
Association of Principal Fire Officers (APFO)	Regional Secretary Grampian Fire and Rescue Service 19 North Anderson Drive Aberdeen AB15 6TP
Chief Fire Officers Association Scotland	Chair CFO, Dumfries and Galloway Fire and Rescue Service 120 - 124 Brooms Road Dumfries DG1 2DZ
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)	Rosebery House 9 Haymarket Terrace Edinburgh EH12 5XZ
Fire Brigades Union (Scotland)	52 St Enoch Square GLASGOW G1 4AA
Fire Officers Association	Fire Officers' Association London Road Moreton in Marsh Gloucestershire GL56 0RH
Retained Firefighters Union (RFU)	Scottish National Officer http://www.scotlandrfu.org.uk/
Scottish Fire Convenors Forum	Convenor Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Board City Chambers High Street Edinburgh EH1 1YJ
UNISON (Scotland)	14 West Campbell Street GLASGOW G2 6RX

DRAFT

Ian Vaughn
Scottish Resilience FRS Unit
The Scottish Government
St Andrews House
Regent Road
EDINBURGH
EH1 3DG

BAM/MA

31st August 2009

Dear Ian

RE: Draft Scottish Fire and Rescue Services Framework Document 2009

I refer to the consultation on the above and would make the following observations.

Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service broadly welcomes the draft Framework as it clearly reflects the new relationship between central and local government in Scotland and recognises the importance of local democratic scrutiny. Those principles fit well in the post Crerar era and provide greater focus on the roles and responsibilities of local fire and rescue service leaders. Specific reference to the importance of the IRMP approach is a valuable and timely reinforcement of the principles of an evidenced based approach to risk reduction strategies.

The clear relationship to the Government's 5 strategic objectives and the agreed 15 national outcomes is particularly welcome and helps to further reinforce our role within local community planning, community safety partnerships and single outcome agreements. This synergy with the national outcomes is extremely helpful in terms of our wider engagement with other government departments, local authority services and other agencies in reducing the effect of serious fire, fire deaths and casualties, anti-social behaviour, road traffic casualties and the broader well being agenda.

The Service is highly cognisant of the increasingly challenging impact that reduced public sector expenditure will have and note the general approach throughout the Framework to Best Value, improved collaboration, shared services and greater efficiencies. We restate our commitment to improving joint work in the best interests of the wider public sector but do not underestimate the potential conflict and tensions that this sensible and necessary approach might bring.

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The Community safety section (chapter 2, page 13) in particular demonstrates the desire to enhance community safety and drive down fire deaths and injuries through the involvement of the wider Community Planning Partnerships but also serves an illustration of the additional financial pressure created by work streams that have been funded primarily through efficiency savings. In particular within para 6 of this section we would request that consideration be given to adopting the phase 'to promote pro-social behaviour' rather than the negative messages which are sent through the continual reference to 'anti social behaviour' as the driver for our youth orientated activities.

The joint approach to developing a national training strategy for Scotland that reflects all of the underlying principles of Best Value is not explicit in the draft albeit some reference to it is made to consulting stakeholders in Chapter 2 (page 11). A clearer commitment to true partnership with both local government and individual fire and rescue authorities would be welcomed.

In both Wales and England's Framework document the RDS are specifically mentioned in relation to several workforce issues. Within the draft framework document in Scotland there is a very general paragraph on the RDS. The need not to be too specific is appreciated and the inclusion of any statement indicating support is welcomed however the statement should be strengthened to highlight the integral role of RDS in all aspects of Fire and Rescue Service work and the commitment of Government to ensuring its long term future.

The following paragraph is offered:

"Scotland is heavily reliant on firefighters in the Retained Duty System to protect our communities, particularly those in remote, island and rural areas. All aspects of the framework document apply equally to RDS personnel however there are changing societal norms that can present the RDS with challenges. For this reason Services need to maintain, monitor and review their policies to ensure RDS personnel are able to fully contribute to risk reduction strategies that deliver efficient, effective and economic services in partnership with local communities. Scottish Government will support the learning and development of RDS personnel in partnership with SFRS and will strive to ensure the legislative framework governing working time takes account of the special needs of RDS personnel."

With reference to the IRMP section of 'Managing the Service' whilst the desire to move IRMP planning forward is expressed consideration should also be given within the review planned (chapter 2, page 19, paragraph 2) to establish a method of benchmarking between services the level of intervention and prevention resource allocated to address identified risk.

In general Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service welcomes the Framework as a mature policy document that reflects the Concordat and the clearly identifiable roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders in a modern part of the wider public sector. We look forward to it being given effect by Order under The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 in due course.

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Should you have any questions on our response to the consultation, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

BRIAN A MURRAY
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER