

HIGHLAND AND ISLANDS FIRE BOARD

Policy and Finance Working Group

9 January 2008

Agenda Item	
Report No	

SERVICE PLAN 2009/10 TO 2011/12

Report by the Chief Fire Officer

Summary

The attached report is the draft Service Plan for the Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service for 2009/10 – 2011/12.

The Service Plan presents our aims and objectives for 2009/10 and the subsequent two years. This year the Service has set its strategic aims and objectives in the context of the Scottish Government's Performance Framework. The Single Outcome Agreements established by local authorities set targets for the achievement of the 15 National Outcomes defined in the Government's Performance Framework, and these have been considered when drafting the Strategic Objectives listed in the Service Plan.

The Service Plan also contains a summary of the Financial Plan for the coming year.

An additional section of the Service Plan is in preparation. This section is the Service's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) which was formerly supplied as a separate document. This section will be tabled at the meeting.

Recommendation

Members are asked to recommend Board approval of the Service Plan for the Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service for 2009/10 - 2011/12.

CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

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HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES
18 DECEMBER 2008**



Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service

Service Plan

2009/10 to 2011/12

Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service

Service Plan 2009/10 to 2011/12

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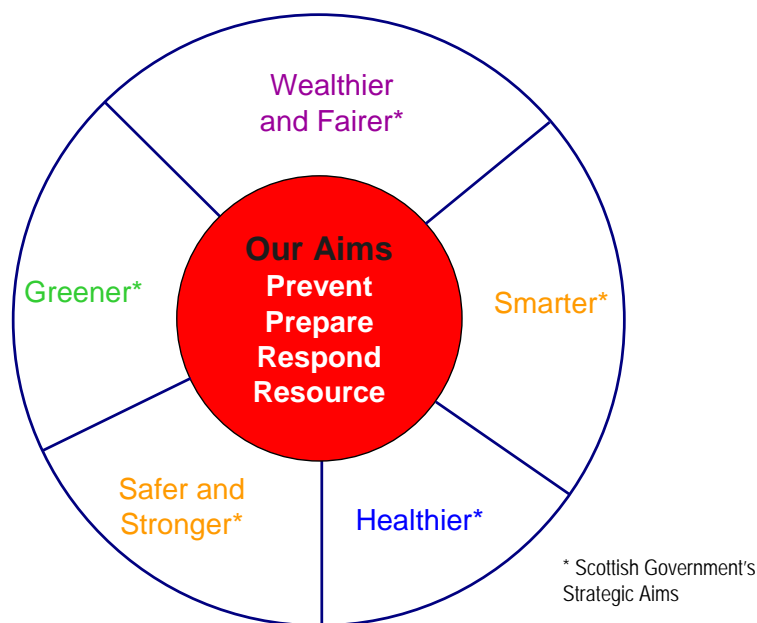
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Planning within the Highlands & Islands Fire and Rescue Service (HIFRS) is co-ordinated with our public sector partners and communities and is underpinned by the 5 strategic objectives contained within the Scottish Government’s National Performance Framework.

Our **mission statement** and **aims** reflect the Scottish Government’s five strategic aims.

Mission Statement
 “Helping make the Highlands and Islands a safer and better place to live”



Our strategic aims

Aim	Description
1 Prevent	Operate a managed approach to identify, assess and reduce the risk within our communities
2 Prepare	Provide the support for a well equipped, skilled, and motivated workforce whose composition and purpose reflects the risks and diversity in the communities we serve
3 Respond	Respond promptly and effectively to fires and other emergencies.
4 Resource	Provide a service committed to the highest levels of quality, delivering value for money, demonstrating public accountability, and championing environmental responsibility

HIFRS sets itself challenging outcome based strategic objectives aligned to our mission statement, strategic aims and the Scottish Government's Single Outcome Agreements. The alignment of our objectives and our strategic aims is illustrated below. The alignment with the National Outcomes is shown in *Appendix 2: The Scottish Government's 15 National Outcomes*.

<i>Our strategic objectives in prioritised order</i>	Prevent	Prepare	Respond	Resource
1. Further develop our operational assuredness. <i>Linked to National Objectives: 4, 6, 9, 12, 15</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Develop solutions from the sustainability review. <i>Linked to National Objectives: 2, 15</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Further develop our Integrated Risk Management Plan. <i>Linked to National Objectives: 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 15</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
4. Further develop operational competence at all levels. <i>Linked to National Objectives: 2, 4, 6, 15</i>		✓	✓	✓
5. Develop our retained availability management. <i>Linked to National Objectives: 2, 6, 15</i>		✓	✓	✓
6. Contribute to the Single Outcome Agreements of our constituent Local Authorities. <i>Linked to National Objectives: 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
7. Develop the information management and document control systems. <i>Linked to National Objective: 15</i>		✓		✓
8. Develop the IT infrastructure. <i>Linked to National Objective: 15</i>		✓		✓
9. Enforce the Fire Scotland Act. <i>Linked to National Objectives: 8, 10, 12, 15</i>	✓			
10. Develop the flooding response capability. <i>Linked to National Objectives: 12, 15</i>		✓	✓	✓
11. Review and develop our Environmental Strategy. <i>Linked to National Objectives: 4, 12, 14, 15</i>				✓
12. Introduce the Firelink communications system. <i>Linked to National Objectives: 6, 8, 9, 15</i>		✓	✓	✓

2. INTRODUCTION

Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service provides a fire, rescue and community safety service to an area which is equivalent to Belgium in size. The population of approximately 280,000 and the industrial infrastructure is spread across the large mainland area and numerous islands. Communications in some areas can be difficult and many communities need to be effectively self sufficient, in the knowledge that emergency support may be a considerable distance away.

Our Service exists to protect and assist people who live and work in, and visit the area in times of need, when speed of response is critical. The Fire and Rescue Service has the specialist skills and equipment needed to respond to emergencies arising from fire, flood, road traffic accidents, explosion hazards and other life-threatening incidents that occur without warning in daily life.

Our principal functions are:

- Protecting the community through promotion of safety initiatives
- safeguarding the lives and property of residents of, and visitors to the Highlands and Islands by responding promptly to emergencies

Protecting the people and economy of an area as large as the Highlands and Islands can be a demanding challenge that requires an innovative and caring response. Our extensive and well-developed Service Planning process helps us to plan for and deliver an efficient and effective service to all the communities we serve throughout the Highlands and Islands.

What is the Service Plan

The Service Plan outlines what Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service intends to achieve in the short and medium term (2009/10 – 2011/12). It identifies the overarching mission of the Service and how the mission is delivered through our strategic aims and objectives. The Plan used to set the scene, inform Service personnel, establish priorities, set targets, allocate financial and other resources, monitor progress, and plan for the future.

The Service Plan forms an integral part of our Performance Management Framework. Our Strategic Aims are aligned to the Scottish Government's Strategic Aims and Objectives as set out in the National Performance Framework.

The environment in which the Service operates is a dynamic one where requirements change over time. We review and update the Service Plan annually to ensure that our objectives continue to meet the needs of the communities we serve.

Ownership of the Service Plan

The ultimate ownership of the Service Plan rests with the Members of the Highland and Islands Fire Board (see *Appendix 1: Highland and Islands Fire Board*) but all employees within the Service both individually and collectively take ownership, and responsibility, for its delivery.

The service planning process

The Service has a well developed Service Planning process involving Staff, Managers, Principal Officers and Board Members. The Service Planning process can be broken down into a number of key steps:

- Step 1** Agree/re-affirm the overall purpose of the Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service
- Step 2** Agree the strategic aims to help deliver the Service's Mission
- Step 3** Establish the strategic objectives to deliver the aims, taking into account current progress on existing objectives, internal and external pressures that affect the Service
- Step 4** Prioritise and rank the strategic objectives using a weighted matrix which considers a number of factors including risk and efficiency
- Step 5** Identify the resource implications of the prioritised strategic objectives, and include these in the financial budget. This process is integral to the Service Plan and is designed to ensure achievement of the Service's aims and objectives within a Best Value context
- Step 6** Communicate the Service Plan to relevant stakeholders including staff, the Fire Board and local communities
- Step 7** Monitor and evaluate performance. This is achieved using a well developed, sophisticated performance management framework.

Timetable

Every member of the Service has the opportunity to submit proposals for inclusion in the Service Plan. Proposals are channelled through the Service Management Team where they are scrutinised in detail.

The timetable for the preparation of the Service Plan is shown below.

Service Planning process	Completion
• Proposals from staff forwarded to Key Managers.	September
• Proposals considered by Strategic Leadership Team.	October
• Proposals and completion reports from Service Delivery, Service Support groups considered at annual SLT Service Plan meetings.	November
• Draft Service Plan submitted to Policy and Finance Working Group of Fire Board together with Budget Requisitions. The Service Plan is also submitted to the Audit Working Group of the Fire Board.	Early January
• Draft Service Plan Budget Requisitions are submitted together to the Fire Board for approval.	Mid January
• Final Plan printed and issued.	March

3. MISSION STATEMENT AND STRATEGIC AIMS

Planning within the Highlands & Islands Fire and Rescue Service (HIFRS) is co-ordinated with our public sector partners and communities and is underpinned by the 5 strategic objectives contained within the Scottish Government’s National Performance Framework.

Our **mission statement** and **aims** reflect the Scottish Government’s five strategic aims.

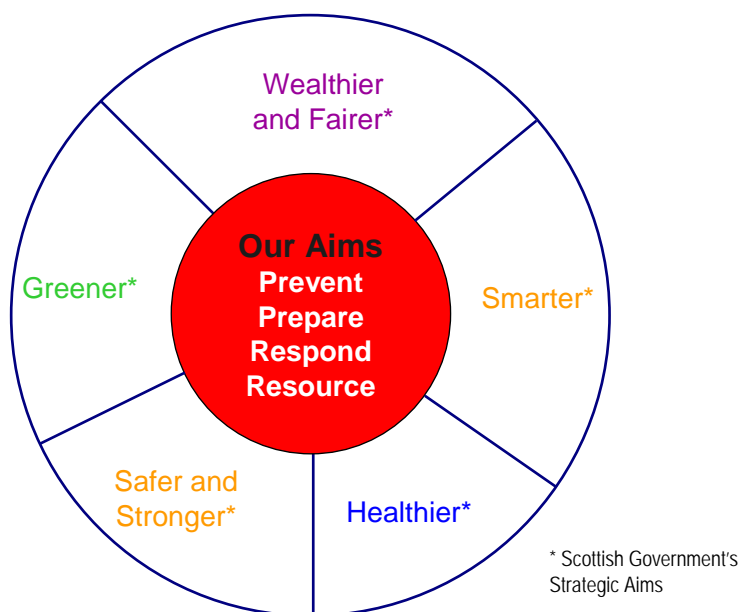
Mission Statement
“Helping make the Highlands and Islands a safer and better place to live”

Strategic Aims

We have identified four Strategic Aims to enable us to deliver our mission. These are:

Aim	Description
1 Prevent	Operate a managed approach to identify, assess and reduce the risk within our communities
2 Prepare	Provide the support for a well equipped, skilled, and motivated workforce whose composition and purpose reflects the risks and diversity in the communities we serve
3 Respond	Respond promptly and effectively to fires and other emergencies.
4 Resource	Provide a service committed to the highest levels of quality, delivering value for money, demonstrating public accountability, and championing environmental responsibility

The diagram below shows how our Strategic Aims are underpinned by the Scottish Government’s five Strategic Aims.



4. THE NATIONAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

The Scottish Government has recently introduced a National Performance Framework which provides an outcome-based approach to assessing the progress and performance of public bodies in delivering their services.



The National Performance Framework

The set of high-level outcomes devised as part of the framework are listed in *Appendix 2: The Scottish Government's 15 National Outcomes*. In the appendix the National Outcomes have been cross-referred to our Corporate Objectives where we make a contribution to the achievement of these Outcomes.

Single Outcome Agreements

The National Performance Framework has provided the basis for the Scottish Government to reach what are known as Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs) with all local authorities in Scotland. These provide an indication of the contribution to National Outcomes expected of each authority in return for the provision of public funds.

The four local authorities in the Highlands and Islands area (Highland Council, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands Council, and Shetland Islands Council) have all submitted Single Outcome Agreements to the Scottish Government.

The Single Outcome Agreements were drafted in co-operation with a number of community bodies, including Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service. The individual SOAs for each local authority indicate what contribution the Fire and Rescue Service is expected to make to the achievement of the National Outcomes in that authority's area.

5. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The following 12 strategic objectives have been identified, in priority order, as key to delivering our strategic aims. The strategic objectives will focus the use of resources over the short and medium term.

Strategic Objective	Prevent	Prepare	Respond	Resource
1. Further develop our operational assuredness.	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>In 2008 the Service underwent a comprehensive assessment of Service Delivery. The report will form the basis of an improvement plan, focussing on four distinct areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Risk Analysis 2. Operational Preparedness 3. Incident Support 4. Emergency Response <p>Benefits: An effective and efficient emergency response to all incidents.</p> <p>Outcomes: An Improvement Plan to ensure that the Service’s operational capability remains consistent with “Best Practice”.</p> <p>Responsibility: Chief Fire Officer</p> <p>Linked to National Objectives: 4, 6, 9, 12, 15</p>				
2. Develop solutions from the sustainability review.	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>During 2009/2010 the outcomes from the Sustainability Review will be reported to the Board. Proposals will be developed to explore possible options for any stations identified as not sustainable as a result of the Review.</p> <p>Benefits: Maximising the contribution each station makes to enhancing life safety and the wellbeing of local communities.</p> <p>Outcomes: A measurable improvement in the ability of the Service to respond to life critical incidents.</p> <p>Responsibility: Head of CRM</p> <p>Linked to National Objectives: 2, 15</p>				

Strategic Objective	Prevent	Prepare	Respond	Resource
3. Further develop our Integrated Risk Management Plan.	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Through the continued application of the principles of IRMP the Service will further develop protection, prevention and intervention strategies which will enhance safety within our communities. Whilst we will continue to deliver Community Fire Safety education and information the Service will also consider the best way in which our resources are allocated to maximise our capacity to save lives.</p> <p>Benefits: The safety of the communities served by the HIFRS will be enhanced</p> <p>Outcomes: Effective Community Safety together with appropriate levels of Fire Safety enforcement will be considered against the level of risk identified and the intervention resources provided.</p> <p>Responsibility: Head of CRM</p> <p>Linked to National Objectives: 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 15</p>				
4. Further develop operational competence at all levels.		✓	✓	✓
<p>Develop a three year strategy to deliver and maintain operational competence (according to the agreed mapping exercise) using a best value and risk based approach to determine priorities and methods of delivery</p> <p>Benefits: Maximising the efficiency of the service through ensuring staff skills and competencies match the needs of the Service</p> <p>Outcomes: Fully defined set of key skills and operational competences for Service staff.</p> <p>Responsibility: Head of People Services</p> <p>Linked to National Objectives: 2, 4, 6, 15</p>				
5. Develop our retained availability management.		✓	✓	✓
<p>Continue to roll out the retained availability management system, ensuring that the staff of the stations concerned embed its use in normal practice.</p> <p>Benefits: Improved service to the communities we serve</p> <p>Outcomes: Efficient and effective deployment of retained staff</p> <p>Responsibility: Head of Operations</p> <p>Linked to National Objectives: 2, 6, 15</p>				

Strategic Objective	Prevent	Prepare	Respond	Resource
6. Contribute to the Single Outcome Agreements of our constituent Local Authorities.	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Ensure that the Service's corporate objectives are reflected in and contribute to our constituent authorities' Single Outcome Agreements</p> <p>Benefits: Improved community safety, partnership working and a better awareness of how our Service can contribute to achieving the five strategic objectives as detailed in the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <p>Responsibility: Assistant Chief Fire Officer</p> <p>Linked to National Objectives: 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15</p>				
7. Develop the information management and document control systems.		✓		✓
<p>Conduct a full audit of the key information systems used by the Service, then develop a strategy for linking the outputs of these systems to the Performance Management and Initiative systems.</p> <p>Benefits: Elimination of manual data collection where existing data sources already exist; clear identification of information sources and systems within the organisation;</p> <p>Outcomes: Improved efficiency in provision of Performance Management data; identification of possible duplication of effort in data and information management; improved access to data currently available only in local or manual stores of data.</p> <p>Responsibility: Head of Corporate Services</p> <p>Linked to National Objective: 15</p>				
8. Develop the IT infrastructure.		✓		✓
<p>Continue to further develop our Service Information Technology network which will result in greater efficiency of operation across all Departments of the Service</p> <p>Benefits: Personnel across the Service will have access to information relevant to their needs when required.</p> <p>Outcomes: Upgrade and enhance existing facilities to encompass change and improvements in technology and communication</p> <p>Responsibility: Area Manager Operations Support</p> <p>Linked to National Objective: 15</p>				

Strategic Objective	Prevent	Prepare	Respond	Resource
9. Enforce the Fire Scotland Act.	✓			
<p>Having become the enforcing authority for the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 Part 3 the Service is required to sample high risk premises to ensure appropriate levels of fire safety are being provided by the responsible person.</p> <p>Benefits: Reduced risk throughout the Service area.</p> <p>Outcomes: The undertaking of appropriate risk based audits on high risk premises.</p> <p>Responsibility: Area Manager CRM Department</p> <p>Linked to National Objectives: 8, 10, 12, 15</p>				
10. Develop the flooding response capability.		✓	✓	✓
<p>Develop the appropriate Operational Procedures, Protocols and Policy to support the additional equipment issued through the Scottish Resilience Programme (formerly New Dimensions) Water Capability Workstream as well as identifying and training the appropriate personnel to facilitate the discharge of the statutory function as detailed within the Fire (Additional Function) (Scotland) Order 2005.</p> <p>Benefits: Compliance with Fire (Additional Function) (Scotland) Order 2005. Enhanced safety for responding personnel.</p> <p>Outcomes: A declared flooding response capability suitable for local intervention as well as supporting Scottish and National resilience.</p> <p>Responsibility: Area Manager Ops Support</p> <p>Linked to National Objectives: 12, 15</p>				
11. Review and develop our Environmental Strategy.				✓
<p>Develop the appropriate Operational Procedures and Policy to support the Environmental Pod provided by the Scottish Government through the Scottish Resilience Programme (formerly New Dimensions).</p> <p>Benefits: Enhanced environmental protection capability that will dovetail with and complement the work of our partner agencies as well as satisfying the needs of the national MOU with SEPA.</p> <p>Outcomes: A declared Environmental Protection response to enhance local capability and contribute to Scottish and National Resilience.</p> <p>Responsibility: Area Manager Ops Support</p> <p>Linked to National Objectives: 4, 12, 14, 15</p>				




Strategic Objective	Prevent	Prepare	Respond	Resource
12. Introduce the Firelink communications system.		✓	✓	✓
<p>In 2006 the service commenced preparation for the introduction of “Firelink” – the new national communications network for the Fire Service.</p> <p>2009/10 sees the project move into phase B with the installation of the Firelink system on all appliances and stations.</p> <p>Benefits: A fully integrated resilient emergency management system</p> <p>Outcomes: Firelink will enable stations to have the ability to communication with other emergency services across the UK</p> <p>Responsibility: Firelink co-ordinator (Senior Communications Technician)</p> <p>Linked to National Objectives: 6, 8, 9, 15</p>				

6. MONITORING PERFORMANCE

To deliver to the high standards expected of us by our communities and stakeholders we must monitor and manage our performance systematically. The Service Plan is the starting point for the Service's Performance Management Framework, which is used to monitor progress towards the achievement of departmental objectives determined by each department from the strategic objectives listed in the Service Plan.

The Performance Management Framework uses a simple traffic light reporting system to rate progress towards the achievement of objectives. Reports from the Performance Management System are produced electronically and reviewed regularly at the appropriate levels of management.

Traffic Light System:

-  Achieved
-  Status unchanged
-  Not achieved

Progress reports are further supported by quantitative performance indicators which are reviewed continually throughout the year at departmental level, SLT and the Fire Board.

A summary of the performance achieved during the year is provided in the annual Public Performance Report (PPR).

Progress Reports

Monthly reports are produced as a management tool for departmental managers and SLT to identify and review the progress against the activities detailed in departmental plans. Where an activity is not on target, the report identifies the reason why and the remedial action required.

Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs)

SPI's are a simple way of monitoring performance against targets, identifying opportunity for improvement and making necessary changes. SPIs are set by the Accounts Commission and allow them, and other interested parties, to compare the performance of Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service with that of other fire and rescue services.

Local Performance Indicators (LPIs)

LPI's are set by the Service and reflect local priorities. Once again they are a way of monitoring performance against targets, identifying opportunity for improvement and making necessary changes, and demonstrating progress against our targets for the year.

Scottish Local Performance Indicators (SLPIs)

These have been agreed by all Scottish Fire and Rescue Services as a way to benchmark performance against each other. All of these indicators are reported, on a quarterly basis, to the following meetings: departmental, service management team, executive command and to Board members. Our performance against our targets is also published annually in our Public Performance Report (PPR).

Public Performance Report (PPR)

The PPR is published annually and in addition to reporting our performance in the current year, it shows our performance in the previous year, thereby allowing comparison and demonstrating trends and improvement.

7. FINANCIAL PLAN

Introduction

Financial planning continues to be a core activity for the Fire Board and the Service. Historically, Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service has faced considerable challenges with regard to both its revenue and capital needs. This continues to be the situation in 2009/10 and into the medium term.

The Revenue and Capital challenges require the Service to have a carefully constructed, realistic budget setting process reflecting both needs and resources. This process is integral to the Service Plan and is designed to ensure achievement of the Service's aims and objectives within a Best Value context.

2009/10 -2011/12 Budgets

The compilation of these budgets is heavily influenced by the strategic aims and objectives of the Service Plan. The detailed resource implications have been included for each initiative in the departmental plans and these, in turn, feed into the budget process.

The revenue budget approved by the Fire Board in 2009/10, excluding loan charges, is £22.8m. Approximately 82% of this budget, £18.7m, relates to staffing. The estimated capital budget for the same period is £2.3m.

The examples below clearly illustrate the link between the Service Plan and the financial budgets.

Firelink

Firelink, the National Communication Strategy contracted for by the Government, is estimated to require £300,000 to fund the set-up costs of training and vehicle conversion.

In line with the Fire Board's Revenue Reserve Strategy, this sum has been earmarked from reserves to fund the estimated "one-off" set up costs associated with the Firelink project.

Operational Assuredness

To assist in the maintenance of the fabric of our buildings an additional £100,000 per annum has been earmarked from 2009/10.

Integrated Risk Management Plan

Additional resources amounting to £152,000 per annum have been identified to assist in community fire safety and other initiatives

Budget Summaries

Summary Budget	2009/10
Staff	16,460
Property	1,561
Transport	576
Supplies & services	843
Admin	491
Central Administration	191
Income	(13)
Firefighting @ Sea	99
Members	49
	20,257
Pensions	2,210
Firelink	300
	22,767

	2010/11	2011/12
Prior Year Budget	22,767	24,014
Firelink one off cost adjustment	(300)	(200)
Pension lump Sums	(874)	(1,547)
	21,593	22,267
Add		
Inflation	648	668
Efficiency Savings	(250)	(250)
	21,991	22,685
Increase excluding unavoidable pressures	1.8%	1.9%
Unavoidable Pressures		
Firelink (estimated)	200	150
Pensions	1,822	976
Budget	24,014	23,811
	5.5%	-0.8%

8. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CRM	Community Risk Management
Firelink	Single digital wide area communications system for the Fire and Rescue Service in Great Britain.
IPDS	Integrated Personal Development System
IRMP	Integrated Risk Management Plan
IT	Information Technology
HIFRS	Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service
LPI	Local Performance Indicator
National Performance Framework	System adopted by the Scottish Government for improving the delivery of public services through outcome-based approaches
PPR	Public Performance Report
SLPI	Scottish Local Performance Indicator
SLT	Strategic Leadership Team
SPI	Statutory Performance Indicator
SOA	Single Outcome Agreement

Appendix 1: Highland and Islands Fire Board

In Scotland the duties performed by fire and rescue services are set out in legislation enacted by the Scottish Parliament. The current Act which determines the duties and obligations on fire and rescue services in Scotland is the *Fire (Scotland) Act 2005* ('the Act').

The Highland and Islands Fire Board is the legal Fire Authority constituted under the Act, and is a joint board representing the communities of the local government areas served by Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service - the Highlands, the Western Isles, the Orkney Islands and the Shetland Isles.

The Board has overall responsibility for ensuring that the Service meets its obligations under the Act, the Fire Service Framework and the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003.

The Board's principal activities are budget setting and policy adoption but it is also responsible for the management systems that ensure the effective and efficient delivery of fire and rescue services to our communities.

Members who serve on the Fire Board are all elected local councillors in their own right.

The Board meets on a quarterly basis. Papers for Board meetings are published on the Highland Council web site at the following address;

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourcouncil/committees/jointboards/highlandandislandsfireboard/>.



Appendix 2: The Scottish Government's 15 National Outcomes

National Outcome	HIFRS Strategic Objectives
1. We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe.	
2. We realised our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.	2, 4, 5
3. We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation.	
4. Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.	1, 3, 4, 6, 11
5. Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.	
6. We live longer, healthier lives.	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 12
7. We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society.	
8. We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.	3, 6, 9, 12
9. We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger.	1, 3, 6, 12
10. We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.	6, 9
11. We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.	3, 6
12. We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations.	1, 6, 9, 10, 11
13. We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity.	
14. We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production.	11
15. Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.	All

The services provided by Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service make a contribution to almost all of the Scottish Government's National Outcomes. The Service is proud of the contribution it makes to the safety, security and wellbeing of the communities of the Highlands and Islands.