

**To: POLICE AND FIRE & RESCUE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE**

**On: 22 MAY 2018**

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**Report by: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITIES**

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**Heading: SCOTTISH FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE TRANSFORMATION  
CONSULTATION – “YOUR SERVICE....YOUR VOICE”**

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## **1. Summary**

1.1 The Scottish Fire & Rescue Service is currently consulting on their Transformation Strategy entitled “Your Service... Your Voice”. The Scottish Fire & Rescue Service is keen to engage with all partners and stakeholders that might have an interest in the future of fire & rescue services and is offering an opportunity to comment on their draft transformation plan via their website at:

<http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/transformation/public-consultation.aspx>

1.2 The strategy sets out the vision for the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service Transformational programme, looking at efficiencies and ensuring that Scottish Fire & Rescue Services can respond to current issues facing communities and future issues that they can see arising as communities develop and change. In particular, it looks at the future role of a firefighter being more extensive and formally including a number of areas of activity that are currently developing across fire and rescue services:

- Emergency medical response
- Multi-Agency response (Terrorism)

- Response to environmental events
  - Wider youth and social prevention work
  - Inspection and enforcement responsibilities
- 1.3 The final date for submissions to the consultation was 14 May 2018, however, following agreement with the Local Senior Officer, this has been extended for Renfrewshire Council to allow the Council's response to be approved at this meeting.
- 1.4 In the attached proposed response, Renfrewshire Council welcomes the opportunity to review and respond to the Transformation strategy, in particular the focus contained in the strategy on emerging risks and on partnership working, including domestic abuse. The proposed response from the Council is attached for approval as Appendix 1.
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## **2. Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Police and Fire & Rescue Scrutiny Sub Committee:

- 1.1 Notes the consultation on the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service Transformation consultation entitled – “Your Service...Your Voice”.
- 2.2 Approves the Council's response to the consultation as detailed in Appendix 1 to this report.
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## **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Scottish Fire & Rescue Service was formed in April 2013 and has statutory responsibilities set out by The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 as amended by the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012. These statutory responsibilities include:
- Provision of advice and guidance relating to fire safety
  - Responsibility to respond to fires and road traffic collisions
  - Response to chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear incidents
  - Response to serious flooding
  - Response to serious transport incidents
  - Response to urban search and rescue in incidents of building collapse

- 3.2 The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is currently consulting on a proposed Transformation Strategy entitled “Your Service... Your Voice”. As part of this transformation consultation, the vision for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is:

*“To deliver a modern, flexible and efficient fire and rescue service to meet the changing needs in our communities”.*

- 3.3 The current Scottish Fire and Rescue Service model has served Scotland well, however it is acknowledged that it was originally designed to meet the needs of communities in the 1940’s. Since then there has been a decrease in the numbers of fires (including a 55% decrease since 1994) and a number of new and emerging risks have developed.

- 3.4 Some of these changing risks include the impact arising from:

- Severe weather
- International terrorism
- An ageing population

- 3.5 The proposed transformation strategy highlights that there is a need to change in order to protect the safety of firefighters and also the safety of the communities that they serve. To achieve this, it is proposed that firefighters will be trained in a wider emergency response role and they will be supported by the necessary training and equipment and improved working procedures.

- 3.6 The proposed transformational strategy is a four-year programme and looks at changing the role of the firefighter to being more extensive and formally including a number of areas of activity that are currently developing across fire and rescue services:

- Emergency medical response
- Multi-Agency response (Terrorism)
- Response to environmental events
- Wider youth and social prevention work
- Inspection and enforcement responsibilities

- 3.7 The transformational change in the strategy includes proposals that will extend and develop the involvement of fire and rescue service employees in partnership work, with a potential for there to be a significant impact on their role in promoting and supporting wider individual and public protection activities. The Scottish Fire & Rescue Service is almost unique amongst uniformed professionals in the way in which it is welcomed into people’s

homes and businesses and this provides the opportunity, with appropriate training and support for Fire & Rescue Service personnel to identify and support those that might be vulnerable within our communities and alert relevant agencies to prevent unintentional harm happening to these vulnerable residents. This could have a significant impact and the proposals are focused on 3 key areas of activity:

### **Reducing demand across public services**

- 3.8 Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has a unique opportunity to contribute to improving wellbeing with access to over 72,000 properties per year. This focus would result in more preventative work and within that the Service is also looking to formalise their role in tackling anti-social behaviour, reducing reoffending and working in partnership to tackle domestic abuse.
- 3.9 The current operating model limits the time firefighters can spend on prevention, intervention and diversion work. A change to this operating model would see more availability of personnel and resources at the time required to conduct this work effectively, further reducing the risk of fires but also delivering real benefits in demand and cost reduction for wider services including health, social care and justice. This vision and focus is very much to be welcomed for the potential benefits it will bring for local communities. It aligns very well with the Renfrewshire Community Safety Partnership and hub model currently working within Renfrewshire and will support the developing Safer Greener Communities approach as it develops its work in relation to victims of unintended harm.

### **Operating more efficiently**

- 3.10 The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service operating model was established 70 years ago and has remained fundamentally unchanged. This includes having the same level of firefighter capacity available irrespective of the time of day despite incident statistics showing that the majority of incidents now take place during daytime hours.
- 3.11 The transformation strategy looks at moving to a more flexible service model with for example, night time crews operating between 11pm and 7am. The service is also proposing to look at the numbers of firefighters deployed in a crew as Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is the only service in mainland UK to deploy designated 'first' appliances with a crew of five (all other fire and rescue services in England and Wales currently operate safely with 4).
- 3.12 The other strand of operating more efficiently would involve the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service in reviewing their property footprint across Scotland and looking at having fire stations located where they are most needed.

- 3.13 Advances in technology will also be used to allow the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service to react quicker in the first few minutes of a fire and to assist in the deployment of the right combination of vehicles to be sent to an emergency, to ensure the most effective and efficient response capability is sent to all incidents.

**Take positive steps to improve the availability of Retained Duty Systems (RDS)**

- 3.14 The Scottish Fire & Rescue Service has approximately 240 fire stations that operate as Retained Duty Systems (RDS). The transformation strategy looks at how the Service can take positive steps to improve the availability of RDS appliances in order to ensure that rural communities get the same level of protection as urban areas.

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**Implications of the Report**

1. **Financial** – None.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None.
3. **Community Planning** –  
  
Our Renfrewshire is safe – By focusing on key areas of Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and setting their vision and transformation process, Renfrewshire should be a safer place to live, work and visit.
4. **Legal** – None.
5. **Property/Assets** – None.
6. **Information Technology** – None.
7. **Equality & Human Rights** – The recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. **Health & Safety** – None.
  9. **Procurement** – None.
  10. **Risk** – None.
  11. **Privacy Impact** – None.
  12. **Cosla Policy Position** – None.
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**List of Background Papers** – None

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**Author** Oliver Reid, Head of Public Protection  
**e-mail:** [oliver.reid@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:oliver.reid@renfrewshire.gov.uk)

**Renfrewshire Council's response to Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Transformation Consultation**

Your Organisation: Renfrewshire Council

Are you responding on behalf of an organisation – Yes

Do you agree with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service overall vision for transformation – Yes

Please say what the main benefits for Scotland may be:

The Scottish Fire & Rescue Service is almost unique amongst uniformed professionals in the way in which it is welcomed into people's homes and businesses and this provides the opportunity, with appropriate training and support for Fire & Rescue Service personnel to identify and support those that might be vulnerable within our communities and alert relevant agencies to prevent unintentional harm happening to these vulnerable residents.

Renfrewshire Council works closely with the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service locally as a key community planning partner and has seen the benefits of this approach through the Renfrewshire Community Safety Partnership and Hub. The Scottish Fire & Rescue Service attend Daily Tasking each week day, bringing issues highlighted in the past 24/48 hours and also taking away referrals from other partners. This has allowed closer partnership working to develop and is delivering real benefits for communities and individuals across Renfrewshire.

The proposed Transformation strategy aligns well with the priorities of Renfrewshire Council as set out in both the Council Plan and Community Plan. In particular, the focus aligns with the focus and remit of the Renfrewshire Community Protection Chief Officer Group and Community Protection Steering Group. Scottish Fire & Rescue Service are a member of both groups and are contributing effectively to influence the development of the public protection agenda across Renfrewshire. The vision and focus of the proposed transformation strategy will strengthen this work and is welcomed for the potential benefits it will bring for local communities. It aligns very well with the Renfrewshire Community Safety Partnership and hub model currently working within Renfrewshire and will support the Safer Greener Communities approach as it develops its work in relation to victims of unintended harm.

In particular, Renfrewshire Council welcomes the commitment set out in the Transformation Strategy to supporting partners in tackling wider issues of vulnerability and avoidable harm in a partnership approach. The fact that this includes tackling anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse is of particular relevance.

As detailed in the Transformational strategy, demographics and risks are changing across all communities and the focus on modernisation and on tackling and responding to these wider changes aligns well with the wider approach set out in the Renfrewshire Community Plan and Local Outcome Improvement Plan.

## Statements

I trust Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to change its operating model – including station footprint – in ways that are safe for Scotland. **Agree**

Firefighters should be trained and equipped to meet the new and emerging risks Scotland faces. **Agree**

Changing the role of the firefighter to being more extensive and formally including a number of areas of activity that are currently developing across fire and rescue services including: Emergency medical response; Multi-Agency response (Terrorism); Response to environmental events; Wider youth and social prevention work; Inspection and enforcement responsibilities will require training and development for employees.

Firefighters should be rewarded for taking on an expanded role, and in accordance with the risks they take. **No comment**

Latest technology should be used where possible to improve firefighter and public safety. **Agree**

Firefighters could be trained to take on roles that would reduce the burden on other public services. **Agree**

A more flexible approach to crewing during the late evening and early morning hours would allow firefighters to do more during the day when demand is higher. **No comment**

Please say why you agreed or disagreed:

Renfrewshire Council welcomes the above statements and agrees with most of them as they align with Renfrewshire Council policies and plans. Where no comment is provided the statement relates to issues that require operational understanding and appropriate management information to be available and are felt to be outwith the remit of Renfrewshire Council to respond in relation to this transformational strategy. Where any specific proposals were being made in relation to operational changes that would impact on service provision within the Renfrewshire Council area the Council would expect the opportunity comment on and scrutinise the detailed proposals.



In particular:

- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service are the only ones that can know the exact model /footprint required to ensure the communities of Renfrewshire are safe. They will know frequencies and response time of calls and how manning stations will assist in tackling issues. As highlighted in the strategy, risks are changing therefore the locations of stations may need to change to be able to respond to different risks rather than a geographical spread to tackle fires. Where these proposals impacted on Renfrewshire Council area the Council would expect the opportunity to comment and ensure scrutiny of the detailed proposals being made.
- It is essential that all staff, including firefighters are trained in new risks, equipment, technology to ensure they can respond to any incident safely and effectively. If the role of firefighters is changing, training must be delivered to all staff. This should also be rolled out as appropriate to partner agencies to ensure their understanding of their role in supporting the Fire & Rescue Service in responding to incidents is understood.
- If modern technology can be used to improve outcomes for communities and reduce risks, it should be tested and if appropriate, used. This is both for communities and firefighters as depending on the incident, time is of the essence.
- Partnership working is essential to maximise efficiencies and prevent duplication. By working in partnership e.g. through the Renfrewshire Community Safety Partnership, partners can be disposed incidents that would previously have been tackled by different organisations e.g. anti-social behaviour could also be tackled by Police Scotland or the Renfrewshire Wardens. Close working means that only one agency would be the lead and tackle the issue appropriately.
- All public bodies should be looking at their roles, when incidents happen and be flexible to change management to target issues that arise. From the Transformation strategy, it appears that most incidents are during the day, therefore it is reasonable to expect that most resource is available during this time – however, this is one for Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to review and assess with detailed operational and management information.

What single thing is most important to you about the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service?

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is a key partner within the Renfrewshire Community Safety Partnership and therefore their contribution is valued and respected. This close working and trusted relationship is most important to Renfrewshire Council. This allows the best outcomes for the communities with regards to the Public Protection agenda.

Do you think there is anything the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service should NOT do as part of transformation?

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service should look at best practice across Scotland and see how they can feed into and expand into other areas. The Service should continue to consult on and engage with partners as the detail of the strategy is developed and implemented

Do you have any final comments?

Renfrewshire Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Transformation strategy and will work closely with the local Scottish Fire & Rescue Service team to ensure that partnership working is maintained and Renfrewshire remains a safe place to live, work and visit.