

## **REPORT TO COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - 7 SEPTEMBER 2017**

### **CONSULTATION ON ABERDEENSHIRE DRAFT LOCAL FIRE & RESCUE PLANS 2017-20**

#### **1 Recommendations**

**The Committee is recommended to:**

- 1.1 Approve the attached Aberdeenshire Council consultation responses on the draft Aberdeenshire Local Fire & Rescue Plans for 2017-20, ahead of formal submission to the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service.**

#### **2 Background / Discussion**

- 2.1 The Scottish Fire & Rescue Service is required by the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 to produce a new Local Fire and Rescue Plan which will set their proposed priorities for the next three years.
- 2.2 As a key stakeholder, Aberdeenshire Council views have been sought in order to allow the Aberdeenshire Fire and Rescue Service to critically assess performance and continually develop and improve local service provision.
- 2.3 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and had no comments to make and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.

#### **3 Scheme of Governance**

- 3.1 The Committee is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Section D 4.2 in the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance to approve a Council response to any external consultation on any policy matter falling within the delegation of the Committee.

#### **4 Implications and Risk**

- 4.1 An equality impact assessment is not required as this consultation response does not have a differential impact on any of the protected characteristics.
- 4.2 There are no staffing and financial implications.

- 4.3 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level: “working with other organisations”.  
Management & Controls are in place through Partnership Policy.

**Ritchie Johnson**  
**Director of Business Services**

Report prepared by Helen Christie, Team Manager Policy & Performance, Business Services  
Date 15<sup>th</sup> August 2017



From mountain to sea

# Consultation on the SFRS' Aberdeenshire Draft Local Plan Aberdeenshire Council response - 2017

Aberdeenshire Council responded to the SFRS' previous consultation, the "Review of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan 2014-2017". The SFRS' new Draft Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Aberdeenshire 2017-2020 (available online [here](#)) has taken many of our suggestions from that consultation, and our new submission below aims to ensure that the final Plan remains consistent with our views.

These are the views of Aberdeenshire Council staff that work across different areas of our geography, and contextual evidence from its Corporate Policy Team.

## 1. Do you agree with the priorities set out in your Local Fire and Rescue Plan?

The council is pleased to see the following elements, previously highlighted in its consultation responses, among the Plan's actions:

- Continue delivering Home Safety Visits and proactive safety education initiatives
- Provide CPR life-saving awareness skills to communities
- Develop a youth engagement programme, including the Fire-Setters Intervention Programme and supporting the Police Youth Volunteer Scheme.

Data from Citizens' Panel surveys shows that these activities are very important to maintain Aberdeenshire residents' high satisfaction with SFRS.

It is also very positive that "Non-fire emergencies" are highlighted as a priority. This recognizes the importance of Road Traffic Collision (RTC) statistics in Aberdeenshire and of the SFRS' role in response. It is encouraging to see that the SFRS will share a responsibility with other community planning partners to reduce the number of incidents through evidence-led initiatives.

## 2. Does your Local Fire and Rescue Plan give you enough information on why these priorities have been identified?

Yes. There is enough contextual information, while still keeping the document concise.

As a minor point: while the council certainly agrees that youth engagement is a priority, there is little information in the Plan to explain this choice. It might be useful to briefly state how/to what extent young people are linked to Deliberate Fire Setting, in order to justify the related actions.

### 3. Is what we intend to do to achieve these priorities clear?

Yes. The Plan shows clear actions throughout the document.

This includes the actions to allocate resources and staff strategically, and reduce cost and time pressures. However, the Plan could potentially go a step further to reflect SFRS recruitment efforts that will take place in Aberdeenshire - for example, career days with young people, or an outreach to employers and public sector organisations to increase the availability of part-time retained duty staff.

As our locally-based staff reports, local planning partners have also expressed a willingness to support the SFRS with recruitment efforts and would be keen to see actions towards this included in the Local Plan, following some joint discussion and agreement.

### 4. Is how we intend to measure our performance clear?

Yes.

We would ask the SFRS to consider changing the third outcome in “Deliberate Fire Setting” to make it more measurable, as follows: “Reducing the number of young people engaging in anti-social behaviour”.

The part of the sentence that currently says “...by encouraging them to be good citizens, through initiatives such as Street Sports” should be an action, not an outcome.

### 5. Is it clear how the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will work in partnership to contribute to the delivery of other community priorities?

The Plan very clearly shows the SFRS’ commitment to working with communities and especially with the Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) as a statutory partner. The LOIPs and Locality Plans will be an important piece of partnership work and the SFRS’ continued input and contribution to the plans is greatly welcomed. Various other important partnerships are also mentioned, such as community councils, Area Committees, the Grampian Local Resilience Partnership, among others.

However, the Plan could be clearer in describing how the SFRS will derive and supply even more value than they already do in their partnership work. While we appreciate that the partnership landscape can be complex and time-consuming, our staff and community groups have suggested that they would welcome an even more active approach in meetings from the SFRS. For example, the SFRS could encourage its representatives to propose agenda items more frequently, ask for partners’ support, and give occasional presentations or regular updates about their services.

### 6. If you would like to provide any further comments you can do so here.

Overall the Council views the role and contribution of the SFRS in Aberdeenshire as extremely positive and looks forward building on that through this Local Plan.