

SFRS breaks ground on new £12 million training facility based in Edinburgh



The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has broken ground on a new, multi-million pound training centre in Edinburgh.

It will boast the capacity and latest cutting edge technology to train more than 1,600 frontline firefighters annually to respond to the most challenging incidents and protect people.

More than 60 community fire stations – from the Scottish Borders to Stirling and Fife – will have use of the state-of-the-art hub, which will form just one part of an extensive SFRS training network including the National Training Centre at Cambuslang.

A turf cutting ceremony led by Community Safety and Legal Affairs Minister, Annabelle Ewing, marked the first phase of construction at the SFRS East Headquarters in the city's Newbridge area today.

The £12million investment to enhance the safety of Scotland's

communities was also welcomed by SFRS Board Chair Kirsty Darwent and Chief Officer Alasdair Hay.

The training centre, scheduled for completion in March 2019, will be able to simulate multi-vehicle road collisions. It will also enable crews to hone specialist skills such as Urban Search and Rescue and rope rescue while allow firefighters to train using the very latest in firefighting technologies.

Firefighters will also learn how to spot risks and minimise harm in the community, helping the most vulnerable and elderly to stay safe in their own homes.

Chief Officer Hay said: "I am absolutely delighted to be here today to mark this major milestone.

"There can be no clearer indication of our commitment to both our communities and our firefighters than the significant investment in this new training facility.

"It will ensure that our firefighters are trained to work through some of the most hostile environments and disaster scenarios – and reach people at times of need – using the very latest simulation technology.

"Today's firefighter has to be properly trained and equipped to not only respond to our core duty but new and emerging risks such as terrorism and a growing elderly population increasingly calling on our support to stay safe.

"This is a momentous occasion as we continue to move forward in also harnessing the very latest firefighting technologies, setting the benchmark of a truly world class fire and rescue service."

Minister for Community Safety Annabelle Ewing said: "This state-of-the-art training facility will provide our firefighters in the East of Scotland with the vital skills they need to carry out their jobs safely and efficiently in

the face of new and emerging threats to our communities.

“This year the Scottish Government increased the overall Scottish Fire and Rescue Service operational budget by £21.7 million, supporting investment in vital equipment and resources, and we have committed to increasing its spending capacity by £15.5 million in 2018/19. This funding ensures our firefighters have the facilities and equipment they need to keep our communities safe.

“I am very pleased to see progress on the project and look forward to a return visit when it’s fully operational.”

Turf Cutting: Chief Officer Alasdair Hay, Minister for Community Safety Annabelle Ewing and SFRS Board Chair Kirsty Darwent

Photo courtesy of SFRS