

# Fire chief calls on communities to have their say on national service



The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's fire chief for the East of Scotland has called on communities to have their say on how the national service is striving to help keep them even safer.

The Service recently unveiled the SFRS Draft Strategic Plan 2019-2022 – which will set out its proposed direction over the next three years – and an associated consultation.

Deputy Assistant Chief Officer James McNeil and SFRS Board Chair Kirsty Darwent are appealing directly to communities across the East of Scotland to make their voices heard.

The comprehensive Plan includes enhancing partnership working, looking at the current operational footprint and

equipping

firefighters to respond to new and emerging risks such as severe weather.

Further proposals look to supporting leadership and diversity within the SFRS workforce – and delivering a first class and sustainable, national Service.

James McNeil is the Deputy Assistant Chief Officer for the East of Scotland.

He said: “These ambitious proposals are the result of a huge amount of thought and effort, invested with the sole intention of keeping our communities safer than ever before.

“We can see that the challenges and risks we face – such as population change and climate change – are evolving.

“These plans set out how we plan to meet them over the next three years – and we want communities to be at the heart of this decision making process.

“For example, we already have an outstanding track record in areas of prevention where we have seen the number of house fires in the East and across the country greatly reduce over the decades, and so we are actively looking at what else we can do to assist people – and partnership working is also key to that ambition.”

He added: “This is an open invite to all of our communities – from Galashiels to Edinburgh and Stirling – to help us shape our proposals into a comprehensive but flexible plan that meets the very precise needs of our

modern communities.”

The objectives included in the Draft Strategic Plan 2019-2022 are drawn from data and intelligence on the changing nature of risk within communities.

Any feedback provided through this latest consultation will be reviewed to inform the Final Strategic Plan, which will be published in October after it has been approved by the Minister and laid before Parliament.

The SFRS will then develop a flexible three year programme that will include an Annual Operating Plan. This will be published each year and monitored on a quarterly basis by the Board and the Service’s Strategic Leadership Team.

SFRS Chair Dr Darwent said: “This is a very exciting time for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service as we embark upon an incredible journey to release our full potential to do so much more for our communities.

“It is imperative that we meet the changing risk profile in Scotland and ensure that our firefighters are trained and equipped to work safely and effectively.

“We also want to drive even greater partnership working where appropriate – all pulling together in the same direction to keep communities safer than ever.

“We pride ourselves on being an open and transparent organisation, and we are therefore delighted to share this Plan with the people

of Scotland. That feedback is hugely important to us.”

She added: “I would encourage everyone to take some time to ensure their voice heard – and help us shape our vision for the future.”

Community Safety Minister Ash Denham said: “Continual improvement is at the heart of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service’s (SFRS) three year strategic plan which sets out an ambitious vision to further enhance the service available to communities.

“SFRS are committed to engaging with communities and stakeholders and the public’s voice is absolutely crucial in this process. I would encourage everyone with an interest to engage with the consultation and have their say.”

The consultation opened on Thursday, May 9 to Thursday, July 18 and can be accessed here:  
<https://firescotland.citizenspace.com/planning-and-performance/draft-strategic-plan-2019-22/>