
Report To:	Local Police and Fire Scrutiny Panel	Date:	4 July 2023
Report By:	Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	Report No:	P&F/05/23/HS
Contact Officer:	Hugh Scott	Contact No:	01475 715450
Subject:	Scottish Fire & Rescue Service – Strategic Service Review Programme		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting

1.2 The report informs the panel of initiatives that Scottish Fire & Rescue Service (SFRS) are planning as part of their Strategic Service Review Programme (SSRP), and the local service implications.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the panel notes the information provided in this report.

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director
Education, Communities & Organisational Development

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Convener of the Local Police and Fire Scrutiny Panel requested an update on a reported reduction of fire cover at Greenock Fire station.
- 3.2 Council Officers consulted with SFRS to establish what initiatives are planned as part of their Strategic Service Review Programme (SSRP), and how that will affect local service.

4.0 STRATEGIC SERVICE REVIEW PROGRAMME (SSRP)

- 4.1 The purpose of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is to improve the safety and wellbeing of people throughout Scotland. The Strategic Plan 2022-25 has set out the need to modernise the Service by doing more for communities and changing how the service works. However, this is being done against a backdrop of challenging financial times. The impact of inflation means the budget received does not cover all costs and there is a need to prioritise service changes which help close the financial gap. There is also an aim to address the problems of ageing buildings and fleet of vehicles while reducing carbon consumption.
- 4.2 The Scottish Government has set an indicative flat cash budget for the next four years which, due to inflationary pressures, is effectively a reduction in SFRS budget. As a result, there is a need to make savings across the Service which are planned to last until at least 2026/27. All this work will form the Strategic Service Review Programme (SSRP). There are several initiatives planned for 2023/24 across the Service. These are the changes that can be made quickly while long-term solutions are developed to improve the Service and address budgetary pressures.

5.0 TEMPORARY APPLIANCE WITHDRAWAL

- 5.1 Every day across Scotland SFRS must take wholtime appliances “off the run” – that is make them temporarily unavailable. A wholtime appliance is crewed by SFRS full time staff. This is caused initially by being unable to reach a staffing level that meets their Target Operating Model (TOM) and is exacerbated by several factors such as planned training, staff absence or lack of relevant skills. There is a system to identify which pumps are most suitable to withdraw and work is done with local management teams to ensure operational resilience is maintained. However, on any given day there may be multiple pumps off the run across Scotland.
- 5.2 The approach in 5.1 is viewed by the service as a reactive approach which doesn’t take impact or community risk into account. Managing this every day puts pressure on their central staffing team and creates an increase in the use of overtime and detached duties (where firefighters are sent to a different station to cover staffing gaps or absence). Overtime bills can be up to £12,000 a day. To alleviate this pressure, SFRS have identified 10 appliances which can be temporarily removed from service with the least impact on response times. These appliances have been chosen based on data and evidence along with full consideration of risk and demand.

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HIGH-REACH APPLIANCE STRATEGY

- 6.1 The High-Reach Appliance (HRA) fleet has seen significant investment over recent years with new dedicated HRAs introduced into service as planned replacements for older assets. In total, eight new HRAs have been brought into service since 2016, with a further two Turntable Ladders due by March 2024. While newer and more reliable vehicles have been introduced, the current distribution of HRAs hasn’t changed much in the last 10 years.

- 6.2 The Operational Strategy 2022-32 identified the need to review HRA provision across Scotland to ensure a more even distribution and remove older vehicles and in particular the Aerial Rescue Pumps (ARP) from the fleet (which carry significant maintenance costs), replacing them with dedicated height or pumping appliances. Many of these appliances are seldom used for their height capability and a fleet of staffed dedicated height appliances complementing more agile pumping appliances is a better model.
- 6.3 Overall, SFRS will reduce the number of HRAs from 25 to 14 which will also help reduce capital backlog. This work will continue throughout 2023/24 and in conjunction with the temporary appliance withdrawals to minimise the impact on staff changes.

7.0 COMMUNITY RISK INDEX MODEL (CRIM)

- 7.1 Decisions around service changes are based on a Community Risk Index Model (CRIM) which has been developed to create a knowledge base of what each area in Scotland needs aligned to risk and where to place resources to best meet those demands.

Decision-making will be based on:

- Community Risk and Demand analysis
- Operational Response modelling outputs
- Changes to specialist capabilities assets aligned to the Operational Strategy 2022-32
- People and Workforce planning impacts
- Financial planning and assumptions
- Involvement of Stakeholders

8.0 LOCAL SUPPORT AND DELIVERY

- 8.1 Greenock Community Fire Station has three Operational Assets and a crewing model supported by 45 Firefighters across 5 Wholetime Operational 'Watches' and One On Call Unit with the current On Call unit numbers being 12 Firefighting personnel.

The three assets are as follows:

- 1 Wholetime (crewed by full time staff) ARP. This is a vehicle which combines a crew cab and the ability to also provide a mechanical height response should it be required.
- 1 Wholetime Rescue Pump which is more commonly known as a 'fire appliance' or 'fire engine'.
- 1 On Call Rescue Pump which is crewed by local On Call Firefighters. These members of staff are individuals who live and work in the local community and respond via pager alerts and crew this vehicle.

- 8.2 Greenock Community Fire Station has been identified as a station which can move to a crewing model which will support both SSRP and the Height Strategy. The ARP will now become a dedicated height vehicle crewed by two members of staff and will operate as normal when a height vehicle is either requested by an Incident Commander, or indeed, if that vehicle would form part of any Pre-Determined Attendance. What this means in practice is that this new crewing model will displace 10 firefighting posts within Greenock Community Fire Station reducing the total from 45 to 35 (the On Call unit numbers are unaffected). Displaced members of staff will be engaged with and redistributed to other stations, in some cases, this may be closer to home. The management of the personnel movements will be done in a collegiate fashion to alleviate any impact on individual members of staff.

8.3 In summary, Inverclyde has 7 Operational assets across 3 Community Fire Stations at Gourrock, Greenock and Port Glasgow and, at the conclusion of these changes, will still retain those 7 assets, with one of those assets (Greenock's ARP) changing its crewing numbers and being specified as a dedicated height vehicle.

9.0 IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO
Financial		X
Legal/Risk		X
Human Resources		X
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)		X
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		X
Environmental & Sustainability		X
Data Protection		X

9.2 Finance

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

9.3 Legal/Risk

There are no legal implications resulting from this report.

9.4 Human Resources

There are no human resource implications resulting from this report.

9.5 Strategic

There are no strategic implications resulting from this report.

10.0 CONSULTATION

10.1 SFRS were consulted to ensure the information contained within this report was accurate and current

11.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 There are no background papers to this report.