

3.0 POLICE CHIEF CONSTABLE RETIREMENT

3.1 Police Chief Constable Sir Iain Livingstone retired on 10 August 2023. Sir Iain, who was appointed Chief Constable in August 2018 and served as Interim Chief from September 2017, announced his decision to retire from policing in February. Chief Constable Farrell will take up post on 9 October with Deputy Chief Constable Designate Fiona Taylor taking on the responsibilities of Chief Constable in the interim period. A summary of Sir Iain's career is available on the Police Scotland website at <https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/who-we-are/executive-team/chief-constable/>.

4.0 STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT FOR POLICING

4.1 COSLA, Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority have agreed four key priority areas to strengthen collaboration between Local Government and policing in the years ahead. A Strategic Partnership Agreement sets out a commitment to strengthening existing collaboration on a range of agreed strategic priorities, as well as promote and support partnership working. The four priority areas which the organisations will focus on over the current term (2022-2027) are:

- local scrutiny and accountability
- prevention and early intervention
- health and wellbeing
- resource and investment

A Partnership Delivery Plan will be developed to drive forward progress on these priorities.

5.0 DON'T FEED HATE CAMPAIGN

5.1 Don't Feed Hate is Police Scotland's latest hate crime campaign which targets young men aged 18 to 30, who are identified as one of the groups most at risk of committing hate crime. They are being asked to pause, reflect, and find other outlets for their frustrations, building an understanding of the causes of hate and the lasting impact it can have. Information on the campaign can be found at this link <https://www.scotland.police.uk/what-s-happening/campaigns/2023/hate-crime/>.

6.0 HIS MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY IN SCOTLAND (HMICS) ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

6.1 HMICS published its annual report for 2022-23 in August 2023. The report highlights the organization's efforts to improve policing across Scotland and fulfil its statutory duty to inquire into the effectiveness and efficiency of the Police Service of Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority. The report covers various areas, including inspections, thematic reviews, and strategic assessments. It also provides insight into the organization's vision, purpose, objectives, and values. Overall, the report aims to provide professional advice and guidance on policing in Scotland and bring understanding into the HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland's work. The full report can be accessed at <https://www.hmics.scot/publications/hmics-annual-report-2022-2023>.

7.0 SFRS – STRATEGIC SERVICE REVIEW PROGRAMME

- 7.1 At a special meeting of the panel on 4 July 2023 a motion was passed for the chair of the panel to write to SFRS Chief Officer and the chair of SFRS Board to raise concerns around the implementation of the SFRS strategic service review programme. These concerns related to engagement with the Fire Brigade Union (FBU) and consultation with Fire & Scrutiny Panels on changes proposed as part of the programme.
- 7.2 A letter was issued by the Chair of Inverclyde Local Police and Fire Scrutiny Panel on the 7 July 2023 to the Chair of SFRS Board, Dr Kirsty Darwent, and SFRS Chief Officer, Ross Haggart, setting out the panels concerns.
- 7.3 A letter dated 13 July 2023 was received from Dr Kirsty Darwent, in response to those concerns. The letter sets out the financial challenges which led to the temporary changes proposed within the current financial year, and provides reassurance that longer-term options from 2024-25 will go through full consultation. The letter also goes on to describe the engagement with the FBU to date on the programme and assurances that this will continue.
- 7.4 A copy of both letters is contained within the appendices to this report.

8.0 SFRS - UNWANTED FALSE ALARMS

- 8.1 Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) has changed the way it responds to unwanted fire alarm signals. From 1 July 2023 an alarm activation has required those with fire safety responsibility, known as duty holders, to investigate the cause of an alarm and only call 999 once a fire has been confirmed. This approach is already embedded across several other UK fire and rescue services, who require a confirmed fire before they send fire appliances.

The change in response will affect all premises and businesses who do not provide sleeping accommodation. Hospitals, care homes, hotels, student accommodation and domestic dwellings will continue to receive the current level of emergency response.

Workplaces are being reminded to provide adequate training for staff on the new process and put in place fire safety provisions.

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 (LOIP/Corporate Plan)		X
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty		X
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/risk implications contained within this report.

9.4 Human Resources

There are no human resource implications contained within this report.

9.5 Strategic

There are no strategic implications contained within this report.

10.0 CONSULTATION

10.1 There were no consultations required outside those noted in the report.

11.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 There are no background papers associated with this report.

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Direct Line: 01475 712361
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Our Ref: DW/dr
Your Ref:
Date: 7 July 2023

Dear Kirsty / Ross,

After an initial approach by the Fire Brigade Union who was concerned about the recent announcement of budget cuts in the Fire Service, and in particular in Inverclyde, I asked for an emergency meeting of the Police and Fire Scrutiny Panel to be convened.

Before the meeting, elected members listened to the views of the Fire Brigade Union. At the Police and Fire Scrutiny Panel meeting, officers from Scottish Fire and Rescue service (SFRS) presented a paper on the Strategic Service Review programme. A presentation was delivered by Group Commander Mark Loynd on the community risk model and David McCarrey, SFRS Area Commander, and Paul Storrie, SFRS Group Commander, were in attendance to answer questions.

The paper was very clear about the implications locally of the strategic service review and Mr McCarrey was equally clear about his role in ensuring that Inverclyde remains a safe place for people to live and to work. Members of the Panel were however, concerned about the mixed messages they have received about the implications of the savings on the safety of the public and that of firefighters. The Panel was also extremely concerned about the process that has led up to implementation of the review and I agreed that I would write to you, as Convenor of the Panel, about these concerns.

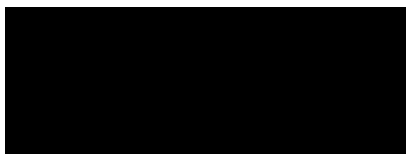
The Panel would like to request details on the engagement which took place with the unions both locally and nationally before any changes were made. I would identify good practice as ensuring full engagement with unions prior to changes being implemented and it seems from the representations made at the meeting of the Panel that engagement has been limited.

The Panel was concerned about the differing messages from SFRS officials and the Fire Brigade unions as to what was safe and feel that these differing messages could add to concerns the public may have about the proposed changes. Can you assure the Panel that SFRS is working with the Fire Brigade Union to ensure that it is fully aware of the risk modelling that has been undertaken prior to progressing any changes?

While I accept the announcement of the implications of the flat cash budget did not allow for any consultation the Panel remains extremely concerned about the overall timeline leading to the interim changes and the lack of partnership working. The Panel heard at the meeting that, given the short timescale, the role of the national board was simply to ensure that due process was followed. I also understand that there will be further consultation before final proposals are confirmed. I have serious concerns that local scrutiny panels have been excluded from the process to date and have not been given any opportunity to comment. The Panel is also fearful that the interim arrangements will simply form the basis of the final Strategic Service Review and that the local scrutiny panels will be given no meaningful role in the process. The Local Police and Fire Scrutiny Panel feels it is best placed to comment on the local implications of any changes and I formally request that it is kept fully informed and involved in the processes affecting local provision in Inverclyde.

The Panel and I have tremendous respect for the work that that SFRS undertakes both nationally and locally. As a panel we enjoy positive partnership working with officers to scrutinise the work locally to ensure the very best service possible for the people in Inverclyde. In my role as convenor of the Inverclyde Fire and Scrutiny Panel, I hope that you recognise the concerns raised in this letter as being in the spirit of enhancing our partnership working and ensuring that we keep the citizens and firefighters in Inverclyde safe from harm.

Yours sincerely



David Wilson
Councillor



Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters
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Dr Kirsty Darwent
Chair of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Board

Councillor David Wilson
Inverclyde Council
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Our Ref: KD/RH/DJH
Your Ref:
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Contact No.
Email: Kirsty.Darwent@firescotland.gov.uk
Date: 13 July 2023

Dear Cllr Wilson

Thank you for your letter of 7 July 2023 on behalf of Inverclyde Council's Local Police and Fire Scrutiny Panel, and for providing the opportunity to address some of the concerns you have raised within it.

I am pleased that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's (SFRS) Local Senior Officer for Inverclyde, Area Commander David McCarrey was able to provide some input in relation to our *Strategic Service Review Programme* at a recent meeting of the Panel, along with Group Commanders Mark Loynd and Paul Storrie.

As you may be aware, SFRS requires to make £11m of savings this year due to the rising costs of running the Service. While additional money we have received for 2023/24 from Scottish Government was welcome, and allowed us to fund a pay rise for firefighters, it is not sufficient to fully address the inflationary pressures we are facing.

We have therefore introduced temporary changes, which will be implemented within this financial year to assist in plugging this gap, and allow us time to undertake the development of options for longer-term change from next year (2024/25). I would like to reassure you that SFRS is absolutely committed to engaging with stakeholders, elected representatives and the communities we serve in relation to our long-term strategic planning. Please be assured that any permanent changes to the way in which we deliver services will go through full public consultation. Please also be assured that the safety of communities and our firefighters is always at the heart of everything we do.

In relation to the temporary withdrawal of ten appliances across Scotland, every day we have to take appliances 'off the run' for a number of reasons, including staff availability. This is managed on an *ad hoc* basis and involves moving staff around at short notice or paying overtime to crew appliances. As well as financial costs, this movement of staff and taking appliances off the run in this way disrupts planned activities such as operational training and prevention work. By temporarily removing appliances, which we have identified will have minimal impact on our response capability, we can reduce those costs and disruption.

In addition, over the coming months we are reducing our fleet of vehicles that can operate at height on a phased basis, taking ageing vehicles off the run and redeploying or introducing a series of modern, specialist vehicles dedicated specifically to dealing with such incidents.

This is aligned to our ten-year operational strategy and based on robust data, which tells us how busy these appliances are and the types of incidents we attend. Various factors have been considered in terms of population and matching resources to the risk and demand that exists within our communities. These national assets will be strategically placed to provide appropriate coverage that is matched to risk across Scotland.

While the timescale for change this year is being driven by budgetary pressures, we need – and want – to make permanent changes to our stations and appliances to ensure we provide a modern, fit-for-purpose fire and rescue service to all the communities of Scotland.

We .../

We have seen a continued downward trend in the numbers of accidental domestic fires across Scotland, while the risks of other incidents such as wildfire and flooding have increased. We are therefore looking at how best to adapt to these changing risks. We also need to find a way to address our capital backlog and invest in our buildings, fleet and equipment across Scotland.

As stated above, we remain committed to undertaking full public engagement and consultation once we have finalised our options for change for the medium and long-term. I would like to assure you that elected members will be involved in this process including through engagement with the Local Police and Fire Scrutiny Panel that you Chair within Inverclyde.

In relation to engagement with our staff representatives, I can advise you that Chief Officer Ross Haggart met with Scottish Regional Officials from the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) on 2 May 2023 along with some other senior SFRS colleagues. This was done so some high-level details around our proposals could be shared with them, prior to any formal decisions being taken, in support of our approach to partnership working with our staff representative bodies.

We have identified which appliances across Scotland to remove on a temporary basis based on those that would have the least impact upon our operational response. As you outline within your letter, this has been informed by our Community Risk Index Model (CRIM). This is a model that contains data from a number of sources, including SFRS incident and socio-economic data to build up a comprehensive picture of risk across Scotland. We have also used the services of an external consultant to model the impacts of removing an appliance from each multi-appliance wholetime station relative to first and second appliance response times.

SFRS colleagues with responsibility for the CRIM have met twice in recent times with Scottish Regional FBU Officials, once on 23 March 2023 and again on 21 June 2023. The purpose of these meetings was to provide the FBU with an overview of the risk modelling work of the team, including the CRIM and the methodology that underpins it.

Please be assured that, along with other stakeholders, we will continue to fully engage with SFRS staff and their representatives as we develop our aforementioned options for change for the medium and long-term.

I can also advise you that a report was presented to the SFRS Board on 25 May 2023 proposing these changes. Following undertaking scrutiny of the proposals, including seeking assurances on the associated assumptions, principles, process and recommendations, the Board approved the report. Following this decision, senior colleagues engaged immediately with our Local Senior Officers so they could inform the staff affected by these changes. This has been on-going since 26 May 2023 and will continue as we implement these changes.

I hope this provides some further clarity, and complements the engagement you have had with Area Commander McCarrey and Group Commanders Loynd and Storrie

Your sincerely



Dr Kirsty Darwent
Chair of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Board