
Report to: Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 21 December 2017

Subject: Transformation in the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Report by: Local Senior Officer Clackmannanshire and Stirling

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide committee with:

An overview of the need for transformation in the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and an outline of proposed changes that may be considered for introduction.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1. It is recommended that Committee notes the report, commenting and challenging as appropriate.

3.0 Considerations

3.1. The need to transform

3.1.1. The Fire Services Act 1947 established fire services in their current form and provided the foundations for a response model which has served Scotland and the UK well for many years.

3.1.2. However, the world today is very different from that of 70 years ago and the SFRS is operating against a backdrop of significantly changing risks and the greatest financial challenge seen in decades.

3.1.3. The SFRS must transform if it is to continue to protect our communities from new and emerging risks whilst operating within the current challenging financial environment. The SFRS is unable to sustain its current frontline delivery beyond this financial year.

3.2. Changing Risk

3.2.1. Our most identifiable role is as that of a firefighting service and this will not change. However the number of fires and fire casualties has been gradually reducing over recent years.

3.2.2. At the same time, our communities are facing new and emerging risks including the threat from terrorism, climate change and a changing demographic that includes an ageing population.

3.2.3. The SFRS needs to transform to meet these risks and continue to provide an effective and efficient fire and rescue service for the people of Scotland.

3.3. The Benefits of Transformation

3.3.1. Transformation of the SFRS will result in a more efficient service that can respond effectively to the emerging risks identified above. The Service plans to make our communities safer by introducing new capabilities that will give firefighters a critical role in responding to a diverse range of emergency incidents including terrorism, severe weather and emergency medical response.

3.3.2. By transforming we can

3.3.2.1. Create a fire and rescue service designed to meet today's risks

3.3.2.2. Deliver our current role more efficiently and effectively

3.3.2.3. Protect and enhance frontline service delivery

3.3.2.4. Improve safety in rural communities by strengthening our Retained Duty System (RDS)

3.3.2.5. Undertake a broader role in vital preventative work

3.4. Our Vision

3.4.1. **Expanding the Firefighter Role** - Our transformation vision is to build a modern, flexible and efficient fire and rescue service to meet the changing risks in our communities. This will include expanding the firefighter role significantly. Our firefighters will have a vital role to play in areas such as responding to terrorism, Emergency Medical Response (EMR), enhancing our response to severe weather events and taking on a much broader preventative and intervention role.

3.4.2. **Refining our station footprint** - Using sophisticated modelling software and data, we will undertake a comprehensive review of our station footprint to identify those stations with low activity levels, high instances of false alarms and located where there is a high concentration of stations and where resources could be combined effectively. In a limited number of cases, stations may be proposed for closure or merger with a neighbouring station. Our decisions will always be planned and safe, will be based on data analysis and will always ensure the communities we serve do not see any decline in service levels.

3.4.3. **Reviewing our crewing models** - Data is showing us that our resources are not aligned to our incident profile. We can meet our obligations more effectively and efficiently through transformation. We have also seen the incredible importance of preventative work, but our current model means crews are in the wrong place at the wrong time to

do more in this area. We need to introduce more flexible crewing models, duty patterns and terms and conditions based upon analysis of risk and activity data. This would allow us to look at undertaking a planned and safe re-balancing of firefighter numbers, this being further enabled by the adoption of new firefighting technologies and vehicles. This will enhance our available 'tool kit', better aligning resource to need. We will achieve this re-balancing through the identified firefighter retirement profile meaning there will be no compulsory redundancies. This greater flexibility is vital to the strengthening of our RDS establishment. The ability to safely deploy crews in a more flexible way will enhance the safety in our rural communities by improving the ability of our crews to deploy.

3.4.4. New appliances, vehicles, equipment and techniques - As we transform to meet new and emerging risks within our communities we must ensure our firefighters have the most appropriate equipment for our wider range of needs. A new style of firefighting vehicle is being developed that could complement our fleet of traditional fire appliances – giving us more flexibility to meet local risks. These new emergency vehicles are already a proven resource deployed by fire and rescue services across the UK and around the world. They deliver significant capability in a more agile vehicle that will allow our firefighters to mobilise more effectively, carrying all the equipment necessary to meet local risks. These capabilities will be particularly relevant within our rural areas. We will add to our 'tool kit' with proven firefighting technologies such as Ultra High Pressure Lances that will allow us to deploy differently, deploy more safely and much more efficiently. The use of this equipment is also well proven worldwide. It can improve firefighter safety by reducing the need to commit crews wearing Breathing Apparatus (BA) and can reduce compartment temperatures faster and more effectively than traditional firefighting methods.

3.4.5. Modernising our retained duty system - The dedication of our retained firefighters is beyond challenge, but the model they are asked to work to is no longer fit for purpose. This puts communities at real risk with too many appliances being unavailable due to inflexible crewing models. To strengthen our RDS and to improve the safety of our rural communities, we are looking at a range of solutions to deliver a planned and safe series of improvements. These will include introducing the new vehicles and technology detailed above in certain locations to allow more flexible deployment. We will also appoint full time crew managers in key locations to enhance capabilities and provide the right level of support to our committed RDS crews. We will improve community resilience through the addition of defibrillators on appliances and enhanced EMR training for crews. Looking to the future, we will work to address the traditional recruitment and gender balance challenges through a new Cadet Scheme that will complement existing strategies.

3.5. Local Impact of Transformation

3.5.1. Work on transformation within the SFRS is at a very early stage and the impact this may have within the Clackmannanshire Area cannot be quantified at this time.

3.5.2. All potential changes will be considered individually but will only be introduced following extensive public engagement and consultation.

3.5.3. Transformation in the SFRS is being looked at as a national issue and Clackmannanshire is not under individual scrutiny in terms of implementing changes.

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