

**Respondent Information Form****Next Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland**

**Please Note** this form **must** be completed and returned with your response.

To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our privacy policy:  
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Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

- Individual  
 Organisation

Full name or organisation's name

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The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

- Publish response with name  
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**Information for organisations:**

The option 'Publish response only (without name)' is available for individual respondents only. If this option is selected, the organisation name will still be published.

If you choose the option 'Do not publish response', your organisation name may still be listed as having responded to the consultation in, for example, the analysis report.

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

Yes

No

## CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

1. Do you agree with the text set out in the section for **Strategic Priority 1** of the next Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland in relation to **Prevention and Protection**? (Please provide comments in the space provided)

Yes  No

Argyll and Bute Council recognises and appreciates the contribution that SFRS makes to improving the safety and well-being of communities in Scotland.

We support Strategic Priority 1 that highlights that the best means to reduce the human, social and economic impact that fires can cause is prevention.

Prevention activities should be evidence based to ensure that those groups and individuals most at risk are identified with targeted actions taken as appropriate. This is best exemplified by the fact that domestic fires are 4.2 times higher and fire related casualty rates are 4.9 times higher in the 20% most deprived areas compared to the 20% least deprived. However, cognisance should be given to the wider population with action taken to ensure that people's behaviour is entrenched with knowledge and understanding of fire safety.

2. Do you agree with the text set out in the section for **Strategic Priority 2** of the next Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland in relation to **Response**? (Please provide comments in the space provided)

Yes  No

Argyll and Bute Council supports Strategic Priority 2, specifically the intention that resources be made available at the right time across all communities in Scotland.

Argyll and Bute is an area of contrast from large urban settlements to sparsely populated rural areas. It is therefore critical that the delivery model reflects the differing needs of local communities. We therefore welcome the provisions within the 2012 Act that the service must produce a local fire and rescue plan for each local authority area.

As the experts SFRS should decide how best to locate its operational resources based on where the greatest risk exists, making certain that the greatest possible improvement in public safety can be assured across all of Scotland. This approach should be data driven, as highlighted with Strategic Objective 1.

A flexible, innovative and inclusive operational model ensures that the Service is well placed to deal with evolving risks and demands facing communities, it also ensures that the Service can react to all eventualities.

Opportunities to learn from UK and international best practice to enhance operational capability and the safety of its firefighters should be welcomed.

3. Do you agree with the text set out in the section for **Strategic Priority 3** of the next Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland in relation to **Innovation and Modernisation**? (Please provide comments in the space provided)

Yes  No

Argyll and Bute Council recognises the importance of continually improving and modernising the services that it provides to meet the needs of the communities we serve and therefore welcomes Strategic Priority 3.

Any modernisation agenda should be developed using legitimate evidence that ensures that the resources at its disposal are used in the most efficient and effective manner to help serve the communities.

The Covid-19 pandemic has necessitated massive changes to the way in which society functions and is protected. While the pandemic has been difficult it has presented opportunities for all agencies to consider how we deliver and develop our services. It would be remiss of the SFRS to dismiss this opportunity to fully evaluate what has worked well and consider stopping or changing what does not work while embracing new technologies and ways of working.

4. Do you agree with the text set out in the section for **Strategic Priority 4** of the next Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland in relation to **Climate Change**? (Please provide comments in the space provided)

Argyll and Bute Council is committed to playing its part in the global effort to address climate challenges, and has declared a climate emergency, consequently we fully support Strategic Priority 4 and its commitment to continue working with other public sector partners and communities to support action to address the climate emergency.

Argyll and Bute Council have undertaken significant actions to ensure that we improve even further our current positive position and low carbon emissions levels and to continue to make a significant contribution, with our communities and partners, to fighting the critical impact of climate change. We therefore support the Services action to prevent and reduce its own greenhouse gas emissions and working to ensure Scotland's communities are resilient and safe in response to the changing climate.

Given the rural and coastal nature of many of our communities we are acutely aware of the growing threats of flooding and wildfires and the substantial ecological and environmental issues these can create. We therefore welcome the renewed focus the Service has on these threats alongside the continued investment and partnership working to address these risks.

5. Do you agree with the text set out in the section for **Strategic Priority 5** of the next Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland in relation to **Effective Governance and Performance**? (Please provide comments in the space provided)

Yes  No

Argyll and Bute Council agree that having an effective approach to performance management supports robust, effective public scrutiny of performance.

Given the ever changing risks and threats faced by communities it is key that performance management be regularly reviewed and evaluated to ensure the strategy remains fit for purpose and that it enables and facilitates continual improvement both locally and at national level.

The Community Services Committee perform the scrutiny and performance review function on behalf of the Council. The accurate and timely way in which the reports are presented to the Committee is regularly, positively, commented upon by elected members. Elected members are in no doubt the outcomes the Service is working towards, what the intended objectives and goals of those outcomes are, and how its resources are being used to efficiently and effectively achieve those outcomes.

Argyll and Bute Council would encourage the Service to develop methodologies and systems to collect, collate and analyse data in order to understand future trends and enable resources to be targeted where they are needed most and where they can add the greatest value. This approach would also support Strategic Priority 1 and ensures that employees fully understand their individual and collective contribution to the organisation's objectives and the communities they serve.

The way in which people live and work over the last 18 months has altered considerably, therefore any performance management strategy must take this into consideration in respect of the health, safety and well-being of its workforce.

6. Do you agree with the text set out in the section for **Strategic Priority 6** of the next Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland in relation to **People**? (Please provide comments in the space provided)

Yes  No

Argyll and Bute Council supports Strategic Priority 6, and in particular supports the intention to continue to embrace innovation and change to support the SFRS's People Strategy.

Given its geography, Argyll and Bute often faces similar challenges as those highlighted, in areas such as recruitment and an ageing workforce. It is therefore welcomed that there is a focus on succession and workforce planning and we would hope that the SFRS's own Strategic Plan and the Strategic People and Organisational Developments Plan would reflect the specific people challenges faced in rural and island communities and look at ways to address these.

Recognition of the need to continue to develop skills and deliver training to meet changing service requirements is welcomed as is recognising the importance of ongoing and meaningful dialogue and involvement with trade union colleagues.

We must also recognise the positive outcomes of the pandemic such as increased flexibility in ways of working and the ongoing, positive, development of digital infrastructure. Given its geography, Argyll and Bute had embraced these approaches prior to the pandemic and further adapted this when there was a necessity for greater homeworking. We welcome, therefore, the view of SFRS that it should build on the lessons learned from the flexible working arrangements and use of technology which were developed during this period in considering future flexible working patterns.

We note and welcome the recognition of the importance of the mental and physical wellbeing of SFRS staff in ensuring that their people can serve and protect effectively. We would note that within the Argyll & Bute Wellbeing Strategy, we also focus on supporting where possible the financial wellbeing of our employees. [Wellbeing Strategy 2019-24.pdf \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

The approach that has been and will be taken going forward by SFRS in relation to Equality and Diversity appears to be clear, focused on specific areas of challenge and comprehensive.

7. Do you agree with the text set out in the section for **Strategic Priority 7** of the next Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland in relation to **Partnership**?  
(Please provide comments in the space provided)

Yes  No

SFRS continue to be regular contributors to the Community Services Committee, Area Committees and Area Community Planning Groups within Argyll and Bute. We strongly support Strategic Priority 7, specifically working together to ensure that emerging risks are identified before they have had an opportunity to negatively impact upon our communities.

Greater collaboration and partnership working allows all sectors to draw on the resources and expertise, to better reflect and meet local demands and pressures, this is perfectly illustrated in the way in which the country responded to the pandemic. Partnership working also allows for idea creation and often leads to new, innovative solutions to multidimensional

problems. While targeted prevention and protection encourages the identification of solutions and reduces inefficiencies, where possible, whilst achieving operational efficiencies and effectiveness to improve outcomes for our communities.

Argyll and Bute Council is an area of outstanding beauty and enormous variety. With the second largest geographical area of any Scottish local authority. We are a land of contrast and diversity with six towns, many remote rural communities and 25 inhabited islands. We welcome specific reference to the legislative requirements outlined within the Island (Scotland) Act 2018 and the Local Governance Review, which has created further opportunities for SFRS, partners and communities to work together in partnership to propose alternative governance arrangements which can improve outcomes and drive inclusive growth for communities

8. Do you think these are the right 7 priorities to be included in the next Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland? (Please provide comments in the space provided)

Yes  No

Yes. The priorities are clear, comprehensive and highlight the importance of partnership working to ensure that the service meets the needs of local communities. We also welcome the services commitment to embracing new roles and adapting to new ways of working. This flexibility is essential to ensure the delivery of the service within a continually shifting environment in which it operates.

9. Do you think there is anything that is missing from the next Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland that should be included? (Please provide comments in the space provided)

Yes  No