

**PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE****5th JUNE, 2013****Report by Group Manager R. Middlemiss, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Perth and Kinross area****REPORT NO. 1 - 2013****SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE – PERTH & KINROSS INTERIM ACTIVITY REPORT****Abstract**

This report provides members with background information in relation to the activity of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) since its inception on 1 April 2013 within the Perth and Kinross area. It is intended to give an overview of some of the key community safety engagement (CSE) and operational events since this time to keep members informed whilst formal performance reporting across the local area will be presented at the next meeting.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that members note and question the contents of the interim activity report.

2 SFRS ACTIVITY WITHIN PERTH AND KINROSS SINCE APRIL 2013

The transition to a single national FRS has been smooth. Recognition for this smooth transition should be given to those who contributed to the planning process but also to all local staff whose commitment and hard work has undoubtedly supported this.

The Perth and Kinross Local Fire and Rescue Plan for 2013-14 was formally agreed at the Council Meeting on 1 May 2013 and work to produce a professionally published version of this plan for distribution to our stakeholders is nearing completion.

This is an interim plan lasting 1 year until the fire framework and SFRS Strategy documents are published. A review will then take place with a 3-year plan implemented in April 2014.

The budget provision for the SFRS for 2013-14 is £277.3m and has been devolved to 48 people across the service with each of the 17 Local Senior Officers (LSO) taking responsibility for the budget in their area. This figure sees a reduction of some £20m across Scotland and finances will, clearly, be tight yet we remain confident that we can continue to deliver improved outcomes to our local communities.

Community Safety Engagement

As part of the implementation of local plans, and to support the SFRS, targets have been set for both legislative fire safety audits and HFSV's. The targets match those of previous years and are clearly challenging, however, we intend to demonstrate to our communities that we are continuing to deliver the same level of service post-reform. Locally we have had high levels of performance in terms of our service delivery output for these key community safety activities over a number of years and it is expected that all areas will increase their performance levels to a similar standard set by Tayside Fire and Rescue.

To assist share notable practice in other areas and in support of our mission of 'Working together for a safer Scotland' Watch Manager Craig Smith, CSE – Perth and Kinross attended Altners Community Fire Station in Aberdeen to share our experiences gained locally with crews as to delivering HFSV's. This including demonstrating the use of our direct targeted approach to areas of our communities that have a higher likelihood of experiencing fires by going door-to-door to offer our services.

The local crews in Aberdeen have previously had a comparatively low level of activity in terms of HFSV delivery and had not used this method of direct engagement with their communities. Craig outlined the benefits of this delivery method and answered any queries from the local firefighters before undertaking a practical demonstration of this within a residential area near to the station. The local firefighters readily engaged in this, separated into teams and 9 HFSV's were completed within a 90 minute period with the positive feedback being received from the public and firefighters.

A new IT software system to support the management of our CSE activities has been introduced, named CSET (Community Safety Engagement Tool) that was originally developed within the former Strathclyde Fire and Rescue area and is now being rolled out to all areas within SFRS. This system enables a direct link to each local community fire station in Scotland when requesting a HFSV from the SFRS website (see link below). It also enables a complete audit trail to be stored for all CSE activity at each postal address in Scotland.

<http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/your-safety/for-householders/home-fire-safety-visit.aspx>

This system was demonstrated to several of our local partners during a recent meeting at Perth Community Fire Station of the Perth and Kinross Home Safety Partnership. An overview of the system and its use by local partner agencies to request HFSV's for members of our community deemed to be at risk from fire in their homes was given by Watch Manager Craig Smith, CSE – Perth and Kinross.

The meeting was attended by a wide range of partners including PKC Safer Communities Team, NHS Falls Service, Age Scotland and Police Scotland. Craig will undertake further training with partner agency staff groups to ensure that we make full use of our system to target our resources to those with the greatest need for our CSE services.

Roseanna Cunningham, MSP for Perthshire South and Kinross-shire and Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs (including SFRS) recently requested a HFSV from her local firefighters in Crieff. They visited her home on 17 May and the opportunity to promote our HFSV service was used through issuing a press release to local and national media outlets.



As part of his role as Community Safety Committee Convener, Cllr. Douglas Pover has commenced a series of visits to each of the 14 community fire stations throughout Perth and Kinross where he has undertaken a very practical hands-on approach to understanding the role of our community based firefighters. Cllr. Pover has extended the offer of attending these visits to all ward councillors. To date he has attended Coupar Angus, Alyth, Dunkeld, Pitlochry, Crieff and Comrie community fire stations accompanied by a local manager to listen and talk to local crews who have demonstrated various skill sets and services that they provide.

This included pump, hose and ladder drills, wearing breathing apparatus, water and flood response and undertaking a HFSV. An outline of the other community based groups that use our fire stations was detailed at each location to emphasise their use as wider community hubs.



The local First Response medical team in Comrie that operate from their local fire station demonstrated the 4x4 vehicle and equipment they utilise in support of the Scottish Ambulance Service, including defibrillators. Cllr. Rhona Brock also attended the visits to Crieff and Comrie where they also viewed the flood sack storage facility at Comrie that has been provided in partnership with PKC and the flood defence works undertaken following last years serious flooding incidents.



Further visits are scheduled to the other eight community fire stations up until 18 September and LSO Dave Stapley has also extended the offer of personal visits to all elected members should they not be able to attend the planned visits to their local stations.

As part of our youth engagement activities we have facilitated two Young Firefighters courses in Aberfeldy and Perth. The programme in Aberfeldy has been supported by Cllr. Mike Williamson who has attended sessions with the local crew and in Perth we have seen the continuation of our partnership with Perth College UHI with our 'Fire College' initiative. These programmes involve learning basic skills of firefighters in a series of team building exercises and visitations by young people that have been identified as being likely to benefit from this positive learning experience. It is felt that these programmes have assisted in reducing the amount of anti-social behaviour and firesetting (particularly secondary fires) within our communities. This has also led to building many positive relationships between local firefighters and young people which can be demonstrated through the fact that we have experienced no attacks on fire crews in recent years.

Recent partnership working benefits have been realised to prevent serious fire related incidents occurring through timely intervention and the links established via PKC Community Tasking and Co-ordination Group (CTAC) when dangerous build ups of combustible materials and hazardous waste were discovered in Pitlochry and Perth.

Information shared at the North CTAC meeting led to a partnership approach to identify the owners of a derelict building in Pitlochry that children were known to be playing in where LPG and oxygen cylinders had been discarded. The private owners have been identified and actions agreed with them to remove the cylinders and secure the premises.

Similarly, crews from Perth found a large quantity of combustible rubbish and drugs paraphernalia in the common close of a tenement block whilst carrying out HFSV's in the city centre area. Links established through the Perth CTAC Group enabled local managers to liaise with PKC representatives to arrange the prompt specialist uplift of the hazardous waste and rubbish thereby reducing the immediate risk to our communities.

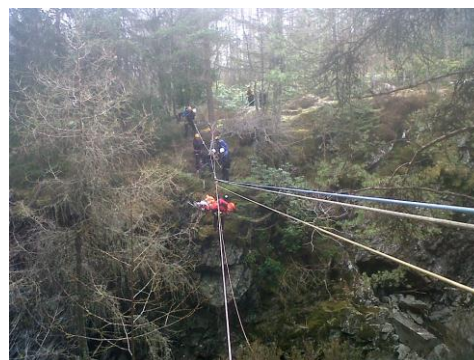
In its 20th year, the multi-agency Safetaysiders event is currently being run at Perth Race Course in the grounds of Scone Palace with an estimated 2,000 local primary schoolchildren due to attend. Local firefighters are again providing support and running our burning building scenario. The event continues to inform thousands of children from across Perth and Kinross how to handle themselves in potentially dangerous situations and equipped them with life-learning skills.



Multi-agency joint training event

On Sunday 28 April firefighters from the training and development centre in Perth participated in a multi-agency rescue event at Bruar Gorge alongside colleagues from Tayside Mountain Rescue, Police Scotland Search and Rescue, Scottish Ambulance Service SORT Team, Scottish Ambulance Service HELIMED Team and members of the Scottish Mountain Rescue Management Team.

The day involved a number of joint training sessions and culminated in a joint exercise which simulated casualties trapped in Bruar Gorge. The rescue involved all agencies working together to recover the casualties using both water rescue and rope access techniques.



Emergency Planning and Events

Our crews in Highland Perthshire played their part in the recent Etape Caledonia cycling event. With access to Pitlochry Community Fire Station being unavailable during the event, the local crew moved the fire engine to the nearby High School at 6am on the day of the race. They then use their time to carry out local HFSV's and checks of hydrant water supplies whilst maintaining the readiness to respond to emergencies.

Our community fire station in Kinloch Rannoch is used as a rest centre and medical triage point during the event with the local crew assisting. It is also next to the football pitch which can be used as a helicopter landing site with the local crew providing landing lights to enable it to be used during the hours of darkness.

The value of this resource has been seen in previous years when severe weather has been experienced and it was used as a shelter. This year it again proved its worth when two separate collisions took place at around the 30 mile point on the north side of Loch Rannoch. A large number of riders suffered injuries whilst coming off their bikes and were transported to Kinloch Rannoch for assessment by a doctor and ambulance crews. Seven competitors were subsequently transferred to hospital, three to Ninewells, three to PRI and one to Pitlochry Community Hospital.

A senior manager was present within the JOC – Joint Operations Centre in Pitlochry to ensure that we had the latest information to enable our crews to support the event and move fire engines as necessary to maintain emergency response cover.

Emergency Response Incidents

The first day of the single national services for Police and FRS brought a tragic accident by Cleish in Kinross-shire when a local man fell through the ice on Dow Loch and lost his life despite the best efforts of a large multi-agency emergency response team. Initial rescue efforts were carried out by SFRS water rescue teams from Perth supported by crews from Kinross and Lochgelly with local Police, Scottish Ambulance Service including Heli-med and RAF Search and Rescue helicopter all providing assistance. Further SFRS water rescue teams from Glenrothes were also put on stand-by to assist but were not required on this occasion.



Specialist Underwater Search Teams from Police Scotland were requested to recover the missing person in a protracted operation that lasted over 3 days. Teams from Greenock and Aberdeen were at the scene on a rotational basis until operations were completed.

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

A recent fire at Perth Railway Station had the potential to have resulted in significant damage and disruption to a main part of our local and national transport infrastructure. A fire was reported within the main building on platform 4 on Saturday 18 May just after 11:30am.

Two fire appliances were mobilised to respond to the incident from Perth community fire station and arrived within five minutes.

On arrival crews found that the fire had spread within the wall cavity of the two storey Victorian railway building and requested a further fire engine. Four firefighters in full breathing apparatus quickly got to work using a high pressure hose reel line, thermal imaging camera and hand axes to breach through the traditional lathe and plaster walls and contain the fire.



Firefighting operations were then extended to the upper floor of the building to remove floor boards whilst using thermal imaging cameras to check for hidden fire spread with the incident being brought under control at 12:37pm.



During firefighting operations trains were diverted to other platforms by railway station staff and there was no disruption to scheduled services. A joint investigation with British Transport Police into the cause of the fire is currently underway though it is not thought to be suspicious.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications as a consequence of this report.

5 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An equality impact assessment has been carried out in line with the services current equality policy.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

This report will have no direct impact on the environment.

7 SUMMARY

The SFRS within Perth and Kinross has experienced a smooth transition to a single national service with no negative impact being experienced to our local service delivery. It has been very much 'business as usual' with some early benefits of access to new and specialist services being demonstrated.

There continues to be a key focus on partnership working through community safety engagement with no reduction in service delivery planned. Formal local performance reporting is being finalised and will be used at forthcoming Community Safety Committee meetings.

Rab Middlemiss
Group Manager – Perth and Kinross