



Draft Wildfire Strategy

(Insert) Fire and Rescue Service

(Insert Title)

Strategy (Insert Years)

Prepared by

(Insert Name)



Draft Wildfire Strategy

Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
1 Introduction.....	4
2 Aims and Objectives	6
3 Impacts of Wildfire	8
4 Action Plan	15
5 Strategic Plan	26



Draft Wildfire Strategy

Executive Summary

(Insert Executive Summary)



Draft Wildfire Strategy

Introduction

This document details the work undertaken so far by (Insert FRS) in its efforts to combat the growing wildfire risk and goes on to provide the forward plan for this work through to (Insert year). This strategy is essential to ensure the communities of (Insert County / Area) remain safe and the disruption to the economic infrastructure of the (Insert region) is not compromised as the global warming increases the risk to the Service, the County and its communities. The effects of global warming are not only seeing wildfires become more unpredictable in areas with a known history of fires, but also putting new areas of the County at risk.

(Insert FRS), in its quest to make the county safe from fire, **cannot** ignore the growing risk to areas such as (insert risk areas) and the communities embedded within it. The risk is a growing one and hence investment in training, equipment education and community resilience is required now to ensure that the Service and the communities of (insert county) are not only prepared for future incidents, but also have done everything possible to mitigate and prevent wildfires occurring in the first instance.

The strategy for (insert county) Fire and Rescue Service is focussed in a number of key areas:

1. To be adequately prepared for any wildfire. This work to include ensuring personnel are trained / exercised and the refresh of all topographical knowledge including the update of wildfire plans, access points and fire defendable lines etc
2. To be able to respond effectively when required, with the right vehicles, equipment and tactics. This is to include having effective access to any asset nationally or internationally as required.
3. To have made the communities at risk from Wildfire as resilient and safe as possible.
4. To have engaged effectively with all land managers / owners to not only ensure that their land is managed in the most effective way to prevent wildfires occurring or spreading in an uncontrolled manner, but also to ensure that land management schemes take into account wherever possible the needs of the Service through the creation of fire land management plans
5. To have worked with partners to deliver effective and sustainable education and enforcement schemes



Draft Wildfire Strategy

Introduction

6. To work within the national wildfire framework to influence where appropriate local, regional and national policy with regards to wildfire reduction through highlighting both areas of best practice and those that require attention

The Service will deliver the operational parts of this strategy through making the necessary investment in personnel (both salaried, volunteer and community) vehicles, training and equipment. The Service will also work collaboratively with partners and communities to deliver the education, prevention and enforcement facets of the strategy.



Draft Wildfire Strategy

Aims and Objectives

Aim

The aims for (insert county) Fire and Rescue in delivering this strategy are to:

- Improve firefighter safety
- Reduce the threat to the communities in (insert county)
- Reduce the costs to the Service, it's partners and society as a whole associated with a wildfire
- Reduce the impact on fire and rescue and partner resources.

The Service will make use of partnerships / forums where they exist (between fire services (FRS), land management organisations, CFOA and government) to ensure they can meet these aims and also ensure that future strategic planning recognises the wildfire risk and mitigates for it.

Objectives

1. Reduce the number of wildfires and the overall area burnt. This will lessen the impact of wildfires on:
 - **Environment** – heritage, natural and built.
 - **Infrastructure** – property, way leaves and transport infrastructure.
 - **Climate change** – reduce the emission of greenhouse gases and CO₂.
 - **Social** – recreation, cultural, aesthetics, life, health and well-being and community.
 - **Economic** – food, fibre, fuel, sporting and tourism.
 - **Fire and Rescue Service / Partner Resources** – Vehicles, equipment and personnel



Draft Wildfire Strategy

Objectives

2. Develop and implement accurate reporting / monitoring tools / mechanisms to demonstrate this
3. Provide a framework for partnership working and ensure that all partners are able to contribute to an integrated approach including; management, education, training, strategic planning, incident recording, regional policy, tactics and doctrine.
4. Provide appropriate vehicles, equipment, training and tactics to ensure that wildfires are extinguished in the safest and most expedient manner possible
5. Reduce the amount of resources (in the region / FRS nationally) required and risk to safety that exists for major wildfire incidents by; sharing resources, tools, vehicles, equipment, knowledge and experience through the use of agreed training and the creation of a regional / national asset register.
6. To provide an enhanced level of training for all supervisory managers and introduce the role of subject matter advisor / tactical advisor into the Service, either on a stand-alone basis or as part of a framework for a regional response to wildfires
7. Work with land managers to link open space management to wildfire prevention / intervention
8. Work with communities to make them more resilient to and prepared for wildfire events through the introduction of schemes such as Firewise and Ready Set Go.
9. Consider the impacts of land management and planning policies on wildfire and work within the political context as required



Draft Wildfire Strategy

Impacts of Wildfire

Wildfires can have significant short and long-term effects on the economic, environmental and social sustainability of the landscapes and communities affected. They also can adversely affect the ability of a Fire and Rescue Service to maintain a normal service

The problem

Wildfires are identified as hazards by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and included on the national risk register. There is a long tradition of using controlled fire to manage some habitats, but out of control wildfires are entirely different and threaten the biodiversity, society and the economy. As shown in the table below, a considerable number of wildfire incidents occur in the United Kingdom. Due to only partial recording the number of primary fires in England between 1995 and 2004 is accepted as an under estimate by wildfire practitioners.

Table 1: Comparison of Number of 'Wildfires' by type and location between 1995 and 2004

	Primary Fires ¹	Secondary Fires ²
United Kingdom	26,935	833,328
England	17,487	496,625
Average total per year in England	1,943	51,181
(Insert FRS)		

Environment – heritage, natural and built

(Insert FRS) has exceptional environmental assets, in terms of both landscape and biodiversity. The County as a whole has many internationally, nationally and locally important habitats which are highly susceptible to wildfire damage, including:

- XX % of the UK's lowland heathland;
- Numerous designated sites, including SPAs and SSSIs.

¹ Known as Primary Grassland and Heathland Fires (FDR1). Those involve more than four fire appliances to the incident. Includes metropolitan Fire and Rescue Services. Data from Department of Communities and Local Government.

² Known as Grassland Fires (FDR3). Those involving less than four fire appliances to the incident. Excludes metropolitan Fire and Rescue Services. Data from Department of Communities and Local Government.



Draft Wildfire Strategy

Impacts of Wildfire

Within the (insert county) over (insert area) hectares of Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) were burnt by wildfires between (insert years), many as a result of deliberate or accidental fires. For example, wildfires have had a significant impact on (insert locations).

Case study A: (insert location)

(Insert case study)

Property and Infrastructure (Wayleaves and Transport)

The County faces a particular threat from wildfire due to the proximity of forestry and heathland to property, wayleaves and major transport routes. Large areas at risk from wildfire are directly adjacent to developed areas. A major wildfire has the potential to damage buildings and property.

Much critical infrastructure in the County is located on or adjacent to agricultural, forestry, defence training and other rural land uses - all of which are susceptible to wildfire. This infrastructure is vital to the region's economy and societal needs, and plays a critical role in response to emergency incidents. Temporary closure or damage to infrastructure has occurred several times in recent years, as illustrated in the case study below. A wildfire could result in serious disruption to the County's infrastructure and result in significant economic consequences.

Given the density of major highways in the County the risk and impact of wildfires is particularly acute. The Highways Agency has undertaken a number of modelling scenarios to estimate the cost of closure of a variety of road types which indicate that costs of up to £1m per hour for rural routes in proximity to wildfire at risk sites:

Scenario 1: Rural Motorway closure - diversion via rural 'A' roads

- A rural motorway has an AADT (Annual Average Daily Traffic) flow of 80000 vehicles.
- The motorway is closed in both directions for 24 hrs to deal with a fire.



Draft Wildfire Strategy

Impacts of Wildfire

- Traffic is diverted to a high standard rural 'A' road and allowed to re-join the motorway at the next junction. They experience an average delay over the 24-hr period (increase in journey time) of 15 minutes.
- The 'A' road also experiences congestion; AADT 32000, average 5 minutes delay over 24 hr period.

Cost of delay: £315,067

Scenario 2: Rural Motorway closure - diversion via inter urban routes

- A rural motorway 100000 AADT is closed and the traffic diverts via inter urban routes.
- An average delay of 45 minutes is experienced by the M/way traffic. Other impacts 200000 vehicles delayed by an average of 15 minutes.
- If the inter-urban route is primarily non-trunk then the cost to HA traffic is approx.: £1,042,500

Cost of delay: £1,737,500

Scenario 3: Motorway Closure – diversion via other motorways and trunk roads

- M25 J13 (dual 4 lane at 1800 vehicles per lane) closed for 1 hour during a peak period.
- M25 - 14400 vehicles experience a 1.5-hour delay diverting via alternative routes.
- Other Impacts A3, A320, M3, A30, A3113, M4, & M40 affected, allow for 36 lanes flowing at 1800 veh/hr. Assume a delay of 45 minutes to 64800 vehicles on their journey on or across the M25.

Cost of delay: £975,780

Case study B: Disruption to Infrastructure

(Insert case study)



Draft Wildfire Strategy

Impacts of Wildfire

Climate change – impacts of changes in climate and reducing the loss of greenhouse gases and CO₂

It is predicted that the (insert region) of England as a whole will be considerably affected by the impacts of climate change. The region is predicted to see lower levels of rainfall, an increase in evapo-transpiration and increases in summer temperatures - conditions which are set to prolong the period that vegetation will be susceptible to wildfires and result in more severe wildfires.

Wildfire fires are extreme weather events (i.e. high temperatures, low humidity) brought about by climatic changes (i.e. drought caused by low spring and summer rainfall), inappropriate land use/management and human motives (deliberate or accidental).

The years of 1995 and 2003 saw the driest springs and warmest summers in recent years and consequently suffered a far greater the average number of wildfires; the number of primary fires recorded by the Fire and Rescue Services during these years disproportionately account of almost 40% of fires in the entire nine-year period between 1995 and 2004. By 2040 the temperatures seen in 1995 and 2003 will be average temperatures, and consequently it is predicted that the number of fires experienced in these years will also become the norm.

Table 2: Number of wildfires in United Kingdom 1995 - 2004

Calendar Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003*	2004*
Primary wildfires**	627	511	380	107	197	183	118	169	303	155
Secondary wildfires***	13,510	7,629	6,060	3,456	5,721	4,081	6,097	5,466	13,100	5,360

Notes:

* = Excluding incidents not recorded during periods of industrial action in November 2002 and Jan/Feb 2003

** = Primary fires include grassland and heathland fires where 5 or more fire appliances attended

*** = Secondary fires include grass, straw and stubble fires where less than 5 fire appliances attended

Red = United Kingdom's lowest rainfall and highest temperatures during spring and summer and worst wildfire years.

Source = Fire Directorate, Communities and Local Government Fire Statistics, HM Government 1995 to 2004 (19 June 2006).



Draft Wildfire Strategy

Impacts of Wildfire

This increase in fires is likely to result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce carbon sinks from vegetation and soils.

Social – recreation, cultural, aesthetics, life, health and well-being and community

For (Insert FRS) Fire and Rescue Service and its partners, wildfire poses a direct and indirect risk to the communities they protect. Directly there is the risk to life, and indirectly large wildfires can seriously reduce emergency resilience to other incidents, especially during critical periods (e.g. school holidays, periods of sustained high temperatures, rush hours etc.). Wildfire creates safety issues for those living in isolated properties either in forests or on, or properties adjacent to heathland. Many sites that are at risk of wildfire are also heavily used for recreation, putting walkers, cyclists and dog owners in danger. In the worst-case scenario fires can result in serious injury and loss of life.

The risk of wildfire can create a conflict between the interests of land owners and managers and those that wish to access the countryside: it is believed the vast majority of wildfires in the County are caused by members of the public³. Land managers are keen to protect their assets and to protect the biodiversity. However, access to the countryside is a key priority for promoting health and recreation objectives. This potential for conflict could be ameliorated through improved public understanding of the risks and impact of wildfire and of fire prevention.

Economic – food, fibre, fuel, sporting, tourism, operational costs

Wildfire has potentially huge and wide-ranging economic costs:

- Loss of income from the land - a fire can eliminate income from field sports for as long as 10 years and destroy timber crops.
- The costs of fighting large scale wildfires are high due to the number of personnel and equipment required and due to the prolonged time periods involved.
- Damage to assets – from buildings to fences. Restoring damaged habitats is a hugely costly and time-consuming operation.

³ Moorland Association (2003) Burning Issues
Page 12 of 25



Draft Wildfire Strategy

Impacts of Wildfire

- Landscape damage from fire also impacts on tourism enterprises which rely on attractive rural settings. Negative publicity in the media could have a significant impact on the numbers of visitors coming into the area.
- Disruption and closure of local businesses adjacent to or within the proximity to wildfire incidents
- Longer term, land or home owners may be unable to obtain fire insurance cover at a reasonable cost.

The combined effect of the various costs can severely impact the viability of individual businesses, threaten jobs and damage the sustainability of local economies.

Case Study D: Thursley Wildfire

(Insert case study)

Increasing Risk

Risk is defined by the likelihood and severity of wildfire incidents in the County. The likelihood of Wildfires occurring is predicted to increase for the following reasons:

Climate Change:

The UK Climate Projections⁴ for the (insert region) in the 2020s predict that global warming will bring hotter and drier summers. As described in section 3.4 the extreme temperature experienced in 2003 will become the norm. It is under these conditions that wildfire is more likely to occur and be of significantly greater severity and difficulty to control.

Increased regional population:

(Insert County) is home to (Insert population) million people, predicted to grow by (Insert) p.a. to (Insert) million by 2026. Whilst it has the nation's highest quality of life, there is considerable pressure to provide accessibility to the (insert)% of the county that is defined as rural. Already the impact of the increased future population and desire for rural recreation has created conflict with Priority Habitats⁵.

⁴ UK Climate Projections (2009) Key Findings for (insert region), medium emissions scenario

⁵ Impacts caused by proposed development on site defined for nature conservation of European importance which require a Habitats Regulations Assessment



Draft Wildfire Strategy

Impacts of Wildfire

As the majority of wildfires in (insert county) are caused by the public, this increase in population will inevitably result in a corresponding increase in the risk of accidental and / or deliberate ignitions.

The severity of these wildfires will also increase, with the following being the major influence on this:

Rural Urban Interface (RUI)

Like many countries in Northern Europe, the United Kingdom has little if any 'wildlands', but does significant Rural areas, cultivated by humans for thousands of years. Rural location adjoins urban areas, and where they meet wildfires can significant impact on human life and infrastructure. In fact, most of our critical infrastructure, such as power lines, transports networks, fuel and water pipeline run through or over rural locations to supply vital services to urban area.



Draft Wildfire Strategy

Action Plan

The risks and impacts outlined in the previous section confirm the need for (Insert County) Fire and Rescue Service (and partners as appropriate) to improve in a number of key areas, namely partnership working, preparedness, prevention and response to wildfires. The following highlights the key areas of each of these strands:

Partnership working

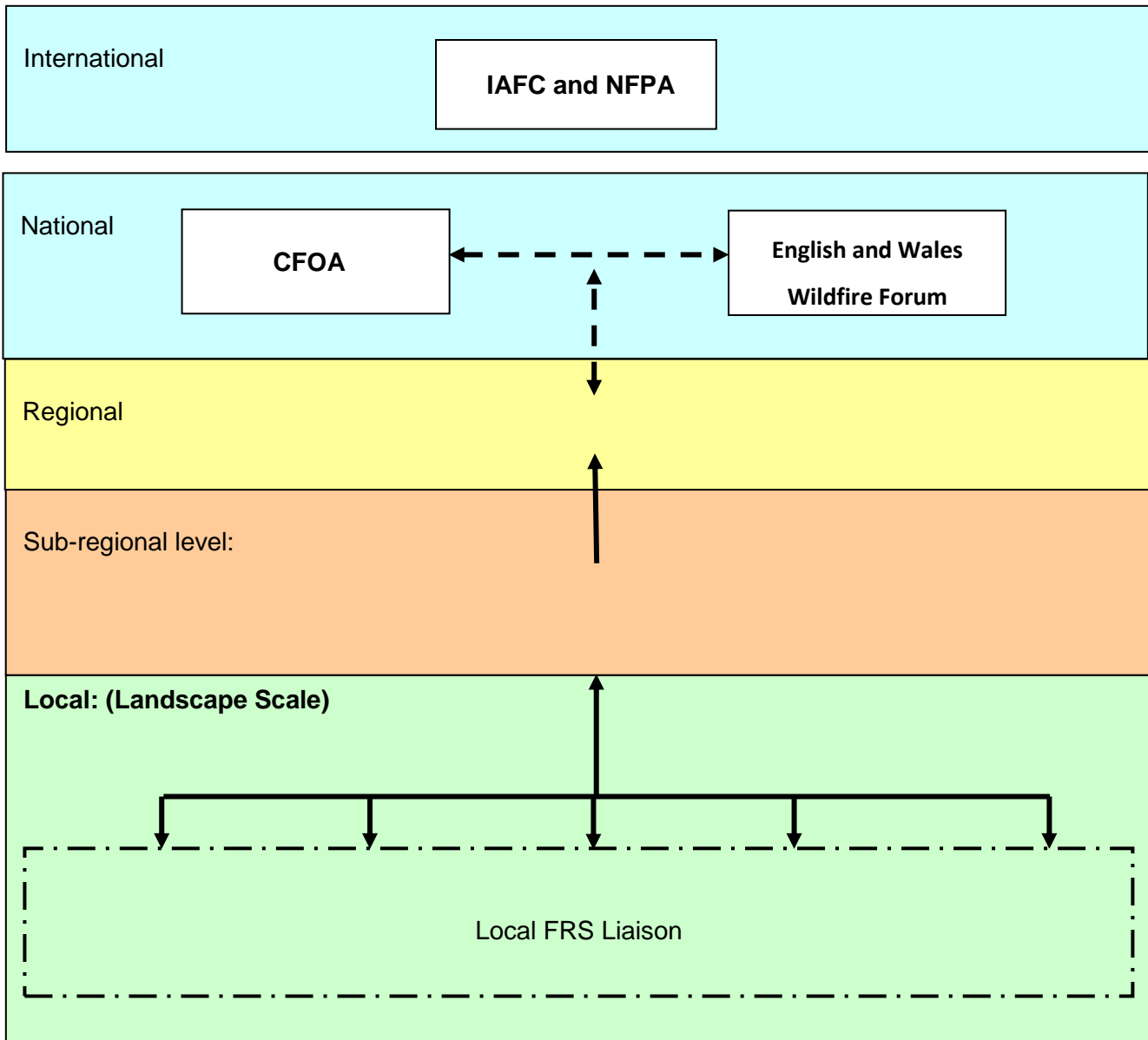
To effectively reduce the risk and impact of wildfires we must bring together the knowledge and responsibilities of the fire and land management sectors. This is because:

- Landowners and managers and Fire and Rescue Services have no framework for joint working. This is a critical hurdle restricting the effectiveness of response to wildfire incidents. We will create this framework by appointing a rural affairs officer (or equivalent) whom will engage with the rural communities / land managers / owners to build the necessary relationships and create the framework necessary for a cohesive approach going forwards (1a)
- (Insert county) Fire and Rescue Service have a duty to plan for wildfire incident but landowners and managers have no statutory responsibility for providing effective preparedness and prevention measures. Therefore they require increased awareness and guidance to reduce the severity and likelihood of wildfires, and enable effective communications with the Fires Services. (1b)
- Incidents often require specialised equipment to extinguish wildfires. This equipment exists but not in the Service and we need to identify owners and investigate the barriers and solutions to sharing equipment. (1c)
- To provide a cost-effective approach to wildfires to reduce the financial burden upon; landowners, local authorities, FRS and land management agencies as well as communities. With the pressure on public spending ever increasing it is vital that joint working and best practice is adopted in order not only to reduce the impact of wildfires but the costs of preparedness. We will work with its partners to promote the introduction of Wildfire Adapted Communities and other such schemes as made available through the identification and adoption of international best practice. There is an established wildfire partnership structure in the UK that SFRS will collaborate with where appropriate:



Draft Wildfire Strategy

Wildfire Partnership National and International Structure





Draft Wildfire Strategy

Action Plan

The (insert names) Wildfire Groups are a partnership of public and private organisations that work together on a range of activities to reduce the risk of wildfire occurrence and promote preparation of an effective response when they do occur. Wildfire Groups have developed in the years since their inception and are now a key mechanism for tackling the risks posed by Wildfires - fire and rescue services cannot tackle these issues on their own. Established wildfire groups, such as the Peak District Fire Operations Group have had considerable success in improving the response to and reducing the effects of wildfires. (Insert name) Fire and Rescue Service will continue to work with these groups to enhance and compliment the effort to reduce the impact of wildfires on the County. (1d)

Case Study E: (insert name) Wildfire 2004

(Insert case study)

Preparedness

(Insert County) has diverse habitats and population concentrations. There is therefore a need to not only fully prepare for wildfire events but also to prioritise the approach to reducing wildfire incidents. We will therefore use a risk-based approach to significantly improve preparedness, thereby allowing targeted prevention activity and ultimately an improved response to wildfire incidents. As a part of this preparedness work the Service will promote appropriate land management techniques to reduce vegetation fuel loading. Linking all of this work to better wildfire reporting systems can also help inform both current and future Integrated Risk Management Plans and help inform development of any policies that could impact on wildfire risk.

The risk associated with wildfire is identified by two key factors, the likelihood of occurrence and severity of the impact. The aim of this preparedness work is to look at the wildfire risk in a holistic way, incorporating a wide range of factors that contribute to risk. We will therefore understand more fully:

- priorities during wildfire incidents (in order: life, property and environment)
- historical occurrences
- the habitat, species, hazards and risks



Draft Wildfire Strategy

Action Plan

And therefore be able to:

- identify risk factors for key infrastructure and assets
- produce a qualitative risk assessment (hazard severity and likelihood of occurrence)
- introduce the use of control measures to reduce the risk

And therefore, ultimately, to be able to produce a

- Wildfire Threat Analysis including the ability to map wildfire risk spatially (2a)

A Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) together with an associated training package is vital to the effective and efficient management of a wildfire incident. Whilst in the past these have varied between FRS, we have developed, in conjunction with the (insert partners if relevant) a common operational procedure and associated training package.

We understand that good partnership working is fundamental to the successful extinguishment of wildfires. Whilst other agencies working on the fireground will be operating within the safe working practices defined by the Incident Command System (and any such personnel will be provided a full safety briefing before undertaking any tasks on the incident ground) it would be beneficial if other agencies were aware in advance of the operating procedures of FRS in wildfire situations.

We will therefore:

- Work to and maintain / influence an agreed regional SOP (2b)
- Maintain a Wildfire Handbook and make it available to all relevant partners. (2c)

Training and exercising is fundamental to ensuring that we are both prepared and respond appropriately and safely to wildfire incidents. It is also important that other agencies, which may be called upon in a wildfire situation, understand how to operate safely on the fireground.



Draft Wildfire Strategy

Action Plan

We will therefore:

- Implement a suitable training regime for supervisory managers based upon the regional SOP and training package (2d)
- Work with land managers / owners to make their land available for joint training / exercising purposes (2e)
- Run suitable and sufficient wildfire exercises each year (including table top scenarios) to meet an agreed set of objectives. These exercises to include working with other FRS and partners to practice a fully coordinated response to wildfires. These exercises should include the testing of navigational skills as well as the practising of wildfire techniques and testing of vehicles and equipment. (2f)

In addition to these exercises, it is recognised that live fire exercises are an excellent method of putting the training theory into practice and are a very good mechanism for developing relationships between partner organisations. Surrey will encourage partners to offer areas of land where burning is required and will not cause any damage to the habitat.

- Encourage and support the use of live fire exercises (2g)

It has also been identified that Surrey personnel would benefit from a better understanding of ecology and recognition of habitat types and their relative importance. This is something that fire service personnel do not possess the requisite knowledge for but land management partners do.

We will therefore:

- Work with the local fore groups to develop a guide for fire fighters to improve their understanding of ecology (2h)

There is also a demonstrated need for an enhanced skill level to assist with the management and understanding of wildfire incidents.

We will therefore:

- Implement the use of a subject matter advisor role (SMA) either on a standalone or regional basis. (2i)



Draft Wildfire Strategy

Action Plan

An operational fire plan is an essential tool to enable fast and efficient response to wildfire. The plan consists of a map and additional information document which contain vital information such as key contact details, location of water sources, access points etc.

We will:

- Maintain the fire plans already created with an annual review system implemented to ensure the content remains relevant. In addition, the Service will continue to identify all areas that pose a current or potential future risk and ensure that they have fire plans created and maintained in the same way. (2j)
- Monitor the Met Office Fire Danger Rating System and / or Severe Natural Weather System (2k)
- Ensure a coordinated effort from partners during droughts and/or heat waves events (2l)

Appropriate vehicles and equipment, used with the right tactics, are vital to bring a wildfire under control quickly and safely. Ensuring that not only does the Service operate such a fleet, but that it also mobilises them in an appropriate manner, will complement the training provided and bring optimal benefit to the Service and the Community by mitigating the effects of wildfire and reducing the impact on the resources used. However, we do not have access to all the equipment required for working on heathlands and wildfires, whereas our partners are likely to do so.

In the event of a wildfire knowing what equipment other FRS and partner organisations hold (and have the ability to call upon it when required) will be a vital tool to ensure that wildfires are extinguished as expediently as possible.

We will therefore:

- Promote the creation and use of a regional asset register (2m)
- Ensure the future Service fleet reflects the growing wildfire firefighting need, with the primary need being to develop a fleet of off road vehicles with firefighting capability (2n)
- Explore future hand tool requirements, along with the relevant training required, to ensure the Service continues to offer the optimal response to this type of incident. (2o)



Draft Wildfire Strategy

Action Plan

True preparedness or even an effective response is not something that the Service can achieve in isolation. Whilst wildfires do not currently affect areas with population densities, communities are becoming more and more at risk. With the predicted effects of global warming it is widely accepted that areas that are not normally at risk in the UK nationally – those comprising our broadleaf woodland / mixed plantations – will potentially be at the same risk of wildfire as areas in Europe, Australia and America. It is vital therefore that we embrace the community resilience models that are utilised in these Countries now, to ensure it is prepared for the future.

We will:

- Introduce Community Preparedness / Wildfire prevention schemes such as Firewise and Ready, Set, Go (RSG) that will help protect communities in high risk areas and develop evacuation plans etc for these communities. These schemes will also involve the community in prevention / preparedness work bringing both immediate and longer term benefits to SFRS and the community (2p)
- Work with land managers to ensure that land is managed in a way that not only minimises the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire, but also allows the Service to access the land and fight any fire in a safe and effective manner (2q)

Prevention

Addressing the causes of wildfire is a priority if we are to reduce the number, areas burnt and impact of fires on the environment, heritage, infrastructure etc. Although there are no quality statistics on the causes of wildfires in the UK, it is widely acknowledged that very few are caused entirely by natural events. Whilst there is very little qualitative data to confirm the most prevalent causes in (insert county), it is widely accepted that there are three main causes of wildfire in the County and the region as a whole:

- Deliberate ignition
- Accidental ignition - members of the public and other legitimate site users, e.g. public having barbecues and bonfires, military training, land management operations.
- Out of control prescribed burning due to poor management or sudden change in weather conditions.

Raising public awareness through prevention work is therefore a key element of the strategy and it must be effective. Whilst there is not a comprehensive understanding of where to target effort and what methods to use to achieve greatest impact, our efforts must be practical in nature and based on what is currently known and achievable.



Draft Wildfire Strategy

Action Plan

This will include:

- Producing a communication strategy and toolkit to include general wildfire prevention guidance for the local and national presses, potentially through a nationally recognised body (e.g. CFOA) (3a)
- Holding, with partners wherever possible Wildfire awareness events - one per year per high risk area within the County being a minimum target. (3b)
- Introducing community resilience / prevention initiatives such as Firewise and Fire Adapted Communities in higher risk communities in the County. (3c)
- Introducing the use of Wildfire patrols by operational crews and volunteers, alongside relevant partners, at peak times to provide advice and prevent behaviours likely to cause wildfires (3d)
- Introduce a range of schools and youth education initiatives to include new initiatives such as Dorset FRS courtroom drama and additional input into existing initiatives such as Firefighter for a Day (FF4AD), Junior Citizens and the Youth Engagement Scheme (3e)
- Utilise the national Prevention Toolkit being developed by CFOA, incorporating best practice from around the Country and overseas, as required (3f)
- Develop a range of additional local prevention materials and innovative ways of warning the public, with agreed messaging, such as the use of overhead road gantries and targeted signage in high risk areas (3g)
- Work with local Police and other partners to ensure that every incident of wildfire is investigated, its cause identified and every deliberate act prosecuted (3h)
- Work with partners and within the national framework to potentially develop prescribed burning as a tool. This work to be a joint initiative between a Service expert (SMA) and land managers (3j)

There are concerns in the region as a whole that the risk of severe wildfire is being increased due to land management practices. Potential mitigations include reducing fuel loading across sites, defining high risk areas next to infrastructure and life risk and maintaining general mitigation measures such as fire breaks. It is key therefore that the Service works with partners (as defined above) and land managers to inform land management practices and reduce this risk:

We will also therefore, utilising the community resilience officers or new Subject Matter Advisors:

- Hold workshops and site visits in identified higher risk areas demonstrating lessons learned and good land management practice, referring to agreed guidance where applicable (3k)
- With regional partners, such as the regional fire group, lobby national bodies and / or government to ensure that the wildfire guidance for land managers is taken up (3l)



Draft Wildfire Strategy

Action Plan

There is a critical relationship between land management, planning policy and wildfire incidents. Developments that are adjacent to land at risk of wildfire, which do not take this into account during the planning stage, may increase the factors, frequency and impact of incidents.

We will therefore, within the partnership framework seek to:

- Lobby key organisations and influence policies to include potential impacts related to wildfire. (3m)

Good communication, with the public as well as partners, will be a vital tool in the work to prevent wildfires. The internet is a powerful communication tool alongside tools such as Facebook, twitter, RSS feeds etc, allowing the Service to put out general prevention messaging and real-time information when required.

The Service will therefore:

- Work with our County media team / specialists / volunteers to develop our web and social media presence (3n)
- Release localised press articles, both seasonal and in response to risk, to improve awareness of the risk of wildfires (3o)
- Provide information to inform national press interest, both proactively and on request (3p)

Response

Whilst this strategy provides an increased focus for the Service in preparedness and prevention activities, it is imperative that it does not lose its focus on providing a highly effective response. We will ensure that we provide the most effective response to any wildfire through a range of different activities.

The earlier a wildfire is spotted and responded to the greater chance there is that it can be dealt with effectively.

We will therefore:

- Implement the ability to provide early warning of wildfires through the use of wildfire volunteers and firefighter wildfire patrols at high risk times (4a)



Draft Wildfire Strategy

Action Plan

- Work to develop an 'App' that will allow our volunteers to provide enhanced information about the size and location of any wildfire that they spot. The ability of such an App could be extended to allow it to 'map' the size and extent of the wildfire event for the purposes of accurate reporting / data gathering (4b)
- Implement a revised summer strategy to include consideration of the disposition of the Service fleet to provide the optimal number of 'wildfire units' (1 H4T, 1 L4T, 1 WC and 1 Appliance) at high risk times (4c)

It has been established that the traditional mobilisation of fire appliances does not provide the most effective response to a wildfire given their limited off-road access and mobility.

The Service will therefore continue to:

- Develop the concept and use of a 'wildfire unit' as the pre-determined attendance to respond to high risk areas or any confirmed wildfire during high risk periods. Accordingly, it will train its personnel to understand fully this concept and ensure that additional resources are requested in the most appropriate manner (4d)
- Promote understanding of the additional vehicles and equipment available to the Service through the regional asset register and ensure that this register is maintained and used appropriately (4e)

There are other tools available internationally which the Service will explore to ensure that it, again, provides the optimal response to a wildfire event:

- Develop the use of air support to provide aerial reconnaissance to assist with planning, incident command and provision of water if viable. This may involve the use of existing assets / relationships (such as local Air Search teams) or the development of new ones / use of EU air support. (4f)
- Explore the potential use of fire prediction software to enhance the response and planning for complex wildfire events (4g)
- Consider the use of drones with imagery linked to the ICU / IT facilities at the incident (4h)



Draft Wildfire Strategy

Action Plan

In addition, it is imperative that wildfires are reported accurately as a part of the response phase. This will help inform future preparedness and prevention work. At present wildfires are still incorrectly reported in both numbers, size and location and there is a strong need to improve the wildfire evidence base.

Accurate fire reporting can facilitate:

- Enhanced Fire and Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMPs)
- Enhanced Regional and Local Authorities Emergency Plans
- Accurate CO₂ and Green House Gas emissions due to wildfire incidents
- An understanding of the costs and impacts of wildfires on the Counties infrastructure and sustainable development
- Evidence and targets for future wildfire projects and business plans

We will therefore seek to:

- Seek to contribute if possible to the creation and maintenance of a joint vegetation fire reporting resource, possibly through the work of the local wildfire partnership (4i)