

Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity
Ministear an Àiteachais agus Ceangal
Jim Fairlie MSP
Jim Fairlie BPA
Minister for Victims and Community Safety
Ministear airson Luchd-fulaing is Sàbhailteachd
Choimhearsnachd
Siobhian Brown MSP
Siobhian Brown BPA



Local Authority Leaders

5 March 2026

Dear Councillors,

Preventing and responding to wildfires in Scotland – a Strategic Action Plan

Today in Parliament, the Scottish Government announced the publication of a new Strategic Action Plan which sets out a number of measures and activities that will improve our prevention, preparedness and response to wildfires in Scotland. The Action Plan has been published on the Scottish Government's website: <https://www.gov.scot/isbn/9781806438983>

As you will be aware, in 2025, Scotland experienced its most severe wildfire season in recent memory. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) recorded a total of 241 wildfire incidents throughout the year, with 109 wildfires in April 2025 alone. The frequency and scale of wildfire incidents in Scotland have increased in recent years. Whilst human actions (intentional or accidental) can often be a factor, climate change is intensifying wildfire risk through warmer temperatures and longer dry spells, particularly in Spring.

Responding to wildfires can place immense pressure on Scotland's communities, emergency services, public authorities and the natural environment. They can devastate landscapes and biodiversity, threaten people's homes and businesses, damage critical infrastructure and release vast amounts of carbon into the atmosphere, thereby undermining our collective efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

The response to last year's wildfires in Scotland from the SFRS and from rural communities, land-based workers, public bodies and local organisations was exceptional. Rural businesses contributed specialist equipment and skilled employees to support fire crews. The knowledge, equipment and rapid response of local land managers, working alongside the SFRS and other public authorities, played a vital role in protecting communities and the natural environment.

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Following last year's extensive wildfires, the First Minister asked that urgent work be undertaken on Scotland's preparedness for wildfire risk. A series of debriefs and stakeholder events were organised to inform this work including:

- a Scottish Multi-Agency Resilience Training and Exercising Unit (SMARTEU) debrief on 25 September 2025;
- a Ministerial-led wildfire summit on 14 October 2025;
- a [Ministerial Statement](#) to the Scottish Parliament on 11 November 2025; and
- a roundtable discussion on wildfires with Members of the Scottish Parliament on 18 November 2025.

Wildfires can no longer be viewed as a seasonal hazard and in order to safeguard Scotland's communities (both urban and rural), natural assets and economy it is vital to ensure that we have the right strategies, plans and assets in place. That is why the Scottish Government has developed the Action Plan with a range of measures and activities that will improve wildfire prevention, preparedness and response. The Action Plan builds on the existing strong collaboration between public bodies, strategic partners and land managers. Measures within the Action Plan include:

- Enhanced public messaging on wildfire risk and danger;
- Enhanced coordination between SFRS, public authorities and other responders during wildfire events through a shared 'Concept of Operations';
- SFRS investment in new equipment, vehicles and training to strengthen its response to wildfires, particularly in rural areas; and
- New legislative provisions that put beyond doubt the ability of local authorities to create fire prevention and management byelaws if they wish to do so. Provision has also been made for fixed penalty notice powers to help enforce such byelaws.

Whilst SFRS lead the operational response to wildfires, local authorities play a crucial role in terms of prevention and risk management activity, land-use planning, coordination with SFRS and local volunteers, community protection, public awareness and education and recovery from wildfire events. We greatly value your important contribution and we are committed to working with you and other partners on this critical work.


We would be grateful if you could forward this letter to the Community Councils in your area so that they are informed about the new Action Plan and the Scottish Government's commitment to improving our resilience, preparedness and response to wildfires.

We are copying this letter to Local Authority Chief Executives and to Jane O'Donnell, Chief Executive of COSLA.

Yours sincerely,



JIM FAIRLIE



SIOBHIAN BROWN

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