**CJ/S7/26/13/1**

**Criminal Justice Committee**
**Wednesday 25 November 2026**
**13th Meeting, 2026 (Session 7)**

# Wildfire Resilience in Scotland

## Introduction

1. Wildfires have become an increasingly significant issue in Scotland, with recent incidents highlighting the risks posed to communities, infrastructure, the environment and those involved in emergency response. Evidence suggests that climate change is contributing to longer periods of high wildfire risk and increasing pressure on public services responsible for prevention, preparedness and response.

2. At its meeting on 4 November 2026, the Criminal Justice Committee agreed to undertake initial scrutiny of wildfire resilience in Scotland, with a particular focus on emergency response arrangements, operational preparedness, workforce implications and the resources available to responding agencies.

3. The Committee is also aware that wildfire resilience spans a number of policy areas, including climate change, land management, environmental protection and rural affairs.

4. Following the summer recess, the Convener met with the Convener of the Rural Affairs and Climate Action Committees to discuss the issue. Committees have agreed to continue discussions on how parliamentary scrutiny of wildfire resilience can best be coordinated and are seeking to work collaboratively as this work develops.

## Written evidence received

5. In advance of today's meeting, the Committee received written submissions from Michael Bruce and the Scottish Wildfire Forum to assist its consideration of wildfire resilience in Scotland. These are listed below:

    - Michael Bruce (personal submission) - Adapting International Ideas and Wildfire Strategies (presentation to UK Wildfire Conference 2024, Aberdeen)

    - Michael Bruce (personal submission) - Development of the Scottish Fire Danger Information System (presentation to UK Wildfire Conference 2022, Belfast)

    - Michael Bruce (personal submission) - Statement of the 8th International Wildland Fire Conference 2023 - Landscape Fire Governance Framework

## Today's meeting

6. Today's evidence session provides an opportunity to question two panels of witnesses:

**Panel 1**

- Jon Henderson, Director of Prevention, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Colin Brown Executive Council Member, Fire Brigades Union

**Panel 2**

- Lisa McGuinness, Director for Resilience, Scottish Government
- Don McGillivray, Director of Safer Communities, Scottish Government
- Michael Bruce, Chair of the Review and Analysis Group, Scottish Wildfire Forum

Issues which may be explored include:

- The scale and nature of wildfire risk in Scotland and how that risk is changing.
- Lessons learned from wildfire incidents during spring and summer 2026.
- The experience of frontline firefighters and the operational challenges associated with responding to large-scale wildfires.
- The effectiveness of current multi-agency arrangements for wildfire preparedness, response and recovery.
- The adequacy of current resources, equipment, training and specialist capability available to responding agencies.

7. The role of land managers, communities and the public in preventing wildfires.

8. The Scottish Government's Strategic Action Plan on Wildfires and progress towards its implementation.

    - What further action may be required to improve Scotland's resilience to future wildfires.

## Previous Committee consideration

9. As part of its recent pre-budget scrutiny, the Criminal Justice Committee considered the resources available to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to respond to climate-related emergencies. The Committee recommended that the Scottish Government ensure the Service has the long-term resources, training and equipment required to respond to increasing climate-related risks, including wildfires.

## Next steps

10. The Committee will consider the evidence heard today before deciding what further work, if any, it wishes to undertake on wildfire resilience.

**Clerks to the Committee**
**November 2026**