



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Published 25 March 2019
SP Paper 502
10th Report, 2019 (Session 5)

Justice Committee Comataidh a' Cheartais

Report on post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 - The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service



Published in Scotland by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body.

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Justice Committee

To consider and report on matters falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, and functions of the Lord Advocate other than as head of the systems of criminal prosecution and investigation of deaths in Scotland.



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Introduction

1. On 29 June 2011, the Christie Commission on the future delivery of public services, chaired by Dr Campbell Christie, published its report on the [Future Delivery of Public Services](#). It recommended that public services become more efficient by reducing duplication and sharing services wherever possible and that a comprehensive public service reform process be initiated. In response, the newly-elected SNP Scottish Government set out plans in its Programme for Government for “legislation to establish single national services for police and fire & rescue”.¹
2. In July 2011, the Scottish Government had issued a draft Outline Business Case (OBC) on reform of the police and fire and rescue services to stakeholders for comment. This had been developed by professional leads from each service with input from experts and stakeholders.
3. The OBC assessed three options for the reform of the fire and rescue service in Scotland. The first was to retain eight services with greater collaboration; the second was for a regional service structure; and the third was a single structure.
4. It also assessed three options for the reform of the police service in Scotland. The first was to retain the eight forces, with enhanced national delivery; the second was for a regional force model; and the third was a single service model. The Justice Committee’s post-legislative scrutiny report relating to the police service has been published separately.
5. On 8 September 2011, as outlined above, the Scottish Government announced its intention to abolish the eight police forces and fire and rescue services and to replace them with two single national services. The Scottish Government also published a further consultation paper, *Keeping Scotland Safe and Strong: A consultation on Reforming Police and Fire and Rescue Services in Scotland*. This set out detailed proposals of how the new single Scottish services would work in practice, and sought views on these proposals and the detailed legislative provisions that the Scottish Government would be required to bring forward to Parliament.
6. The Scottish Government introduced the [Police and Fire Reform \(Scotland\) Bill](#) in the Scottish Parliament on 16 January 2012. The Bill sought to abolish the existing eight police forces and eight fire brigades, along with the joint boards and unitary authorities that maintained them, the Scottish Police Services Authority (SPSA) and the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency (SCDEA).
7. These were to be replaced with a single national police service – the Police Service of Scotland (the Police Service), together with a new governing board – the “Scottish Police Authority” (SPA), and a single fire and rescue service - the “Scottish Fire and Rescue Service” (SFRS) and the new SFRS Board. The SFRS would also be responsible for the governance and administration of fire and rescue services across Scotland.
8. The Policy Memorandum that accompanied the Bill indicated that it sought to deliver the following three policy aims:

1. To protect and improve local services despite financial cuts, by stopping duplication of support services eight times over and not cutting front line services;
 2. To create more equal access to specialist support and national capacity – like flood rescue – where and when they are needed; and
 3. To strengthen the connection between services and communities, by creating a new formal relationship with each of the 32 local authorities, involving many more local councillors and better integrating with community planning partnerships.
9. The Policy Memorandum also set out the framework for the new services and the governance arrangements of the Scottish police and Scottish fire and rescue services. It provided:
- A clear, modern purpose and principles for the police service and an updated oath for constables. For fire and rescue the purpose was to be included in the new Fire and Rescue Framework;
 - A clear statutory framework for national governance including clear roles and responsibilities for the Scottish Ministers, the proposed Scottish Police Authority, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Board, and the Chief Officers of both services;
 - Clear powers for local authorities in relation to the provision of fire and rescue services and the policing of their area;
 - Appropriate scrutiny and oversight arrangements;
 - Clear funding arrangements; and
 - Clear arrangements for the transfer of existing officers and staff and the appointment of new officers and staff to both services.
10. 10. The Bill was passed on 27 June 2012, receiving Royal Assent on 7 August 2012, to become the [Police and Fire Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2012](#).

The case for reform of the fire and rescue service

11. One of the major drivers of reform of the police and fire and rescue services was the reduction in the Scottish block grant, which the Scottish Government estimated would reduce by £3.3 billion (or 10 per cent) in real terms between 2012 and 2016. As with most of the public sector, the fire and rescue service budget was set to reduce over this period. Spending on fire and rescue services was predicted to reduce by 12.8 per cent (£50 million) in real terms over this period.²
12. Reform of the fire and rescue service therefore was, in the Scottish Government's view, an economic imperative. In this context, the Government consistently stated that maintaining eight fire and rescue brigades was unsustainable and that without structural reform smaller brigades, in particular, would be vulnerable to cuts in frontline services.
13. Financial considerations, however, were not the only drivers of reform. Scotland's fire and rescue services were also undertaking many roles and delivering a diverse range of services beyond their traditional firefighting role.
14. The Scottish Government indicated that the new governance arrangements proposed in the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Bill would provide strong governance arrangements and clear accountability for the fire and rescue service.³

Issues raised during the passage of the legislation

15. The main purpose of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Bill was to create single police and fire and rescue services for Scotland, together with new governance and funding arrangements, and to abolish the existing eight territorial police forces and eight fire brigades along with their governing bodies. It also sought to abolish the Scottish Police Services Authority and the Scottish Crime and Drugs Enforcement Agency, to place independent custody visiting onto a statutory footing and to reconstitute the Police Complaints Commissioner for Scotland as the Police Investigation and Review Commissioner (PIRC) with new investigatory powers.
16. The Bill, as introduced, was in 3 parts and 7 schedules. Part 1, the most substantial part of the Bill, was concerned with police reform and comprised 17 chapters, whilst Part 2 was concerned with the reform of the fire and rescue service.
17. The Scottish Parliament's session 4 Justice Committee recommended a number of changes to the Bill in its [stage 1 report](#) and a number of amendments were agreed to at stages 2 and 3 of the Bill's passage. This included a duty on the Scottish Parliament to make arrangements for keeping the operation of the 2012 Act under review and to publish reports on this.
18. Issues raised during the [stage 3 debate](#) on 27 June 2012 included:
 - That a full business case needed to be produced, with details of the proposed financial savings;
 - That the fire and rescue services would not be exempt from paying VAT;
 - Local authorities should be given some control and substantive input into local plans; and
 - That the fire service should retain a visible and effective firefighting presence and protect front-line services.
19. The Bill was agreed to by division. The Scottish National Party and the Scottish Labour Party voted for the Bill. The Scottish Green Party and the Scottish Liberal Democrats voted against the Bill, and the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party abstained.

Committee consideration of the 2012 Act

Written and oral evidence

20. On 1 April 2018, five years after the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Police Scotland began operating, the Justice Committee issued a [call for written evidence](#) to scrutinise whether the policy objectives of the 2012 Act had been delivered, and if not, the reasons for this. The Committee agreed to consider the whole of the 2012 Act, including the oversight and scrutiny bodies detailed within it, including Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. It also agreed to consider how the legislation is being enacted, if there are any unintended consequences, and to identify any improvements that could be made.
21. The Committee received 70 responses (including supplementary submissions), of which 2 were published anonymously.ⁱ
22. The Committee took public evidence on the Bill at six meetings between September and November 2018. A list of witnesses for those meetings is set out in Annex A. The Committee is grateful to all those who took the time to provide oral and written evidence to assist it with its post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.
23. The Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 created the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) to replace the existing fire and rescue authorities and joint fire and rescue boards. The SFRS provides fire and rescue services across Scotland. This includes the Scottish Fire College, the Firelink communications system and specialist capacity to respond to chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear incidents. The 2012 Act also amended some of the fire safety responsibilities to take account of fire reform.

ⁱ Anonymity is granted by the Convener of the Justice Committee on a case-by-case basis.

Evaluation of the 2012 Act

24. The Scottish Government commissioned a [four-year programme](#) of evaluation of reform of the police and fire and rescue services. This was to be carried out by a consortium of research organisations led by the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR) working with Scotcen Social Research and What Works Scotland.
25. The group began its work in 2015 and has published three evaluation reports on the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, with a fourth evaluation currently underway.

Year 1

26. The [year 1 report](#) provided an assessment of whether the three aims of reform had been met, considered lessons to be learned from the implementation of the 2012 Act, and evaluated the wider impact of reform on the justice and the wider public sector.
27. The report found that progress had been made in achieving the three objectives. It included the view of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) that it was currently in the consolidating and integrating phases, with real 'transformation' of service delivery still to take place. The challenges associated with the 'transformation' phase were viewed as being at least as significant as those encountered in integrating the fire and rescue service.
28. The report highlighted three further strategic considerations that should inform reforms of public services. These were that reform involves cultural as well as structural change; that reform may be driven centrally but it is experienced locally; and that reform narratives should focus both on the need for change and how change will happen.

Year 2

29. The [year 2 report](#) comprised four geographical case studies which examined local experiences and perceptions of the way fire and rescue services were being delivered to local communities. Although the four case studies were drawn from four very different areas of Scotland, the report indicated that the evidence presented a remarkably consistent picture.
30. Those involved in the case studies perceived that the level of local service had been maintained since reform, were positive about partnership working, and identified the contribution that the fire and rescue services had made to community well-being. They viewed prevention as a key part of the firefighter's role. Across the four case studies firefighters' also reported that they generally had positive experiences in relation to creating more equal access to specialist support and national capacity.
31. Issues raised included firefighters feeling stretched as a result of declining numbers of administrative staff and concerns regarding the centralisation of support services, poor information technology (IT) and their ability to access some equipment. There were some logistical issues in engaging specialist teams and risks of de-skilling local firefighters.

32. The report recommended two areas for improvement. These were improved internal communication and greater clarity for local personnel about career development and training opportunities.

Year 3

33. The [year 3 evaluation](#) produced a series of publications. There was a main report which was published in February 2018. It focussed on a thematic case study on partnership working, prevention and innovation.
34. An evaluation report was published in May 2018. It focussed on interviews with national key informants selected from the police service, the fire and rescue service, and national bodies out-with those services, and included a summary of evidence. The evidence suggested that the first two policy aims had largely been achieved, but that the third policy aim, whilst viewed as a high priority, is the hardest to achieve.
35. There was a view within the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service that it would be helpful to include an aim which reflected the future of the services as they moved into a process of transformation.
36. The evaluation reports identified four stages of reform: preparing, consolidating, integrating, and transforming. The Committee considered the extent to which the findings and recommendations of the research organisations had been implemented and the stages of reform for each policy intention.

Governance and administration of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

37. The 2012 Act sets out the framework and governance for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. It provides a statutory framework for national governance including the roles and responsibilities for Scottish Ministers, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Board, and the Chief Officer. The Chief Officer and the SFRS Board are responsible for operational service delivery.

Strategic planning

38. Section 114 of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 places a duty on the SFRS to prepare a strategic plan. The plan should set out how it proposes to carry out its functions, detail its outcomes and how these may be measured, and have regard to the framework document, which is to be prepared by the Scottish Government. It also places a duty on the SFRS to consult on the draft strategic plan and have regard to the comments received.
39. The first [Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2013](#) set out the Scottish Government's overarching strategic direction for fire and rescue in Scotland and its expectations of the SFRS. The strategic priorities in the 2013 Framework included governance and accountability of the SFRS and its planning, reporting and performance management functions, and the three policy objectives of the 2012 Act.
40. The [2013-16 strategic plan](#) principally focused on integrating the eight former fire and rescue services operating in Scotland. This included harmonising and standardising corporate frameworks, people policies and operating procedures. It also introduced single finance and human resources systems and developed core digital network and software infrastructure.
41. The [Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2016](#) set out the Scottish Government's new priorities and objectives for the SFRS and its aspirations and expectations of the future service. It did not specify how the SFRS should achieve these priorities and objectives. In its written submission to the Committee the Scottish Government indicate that the 2016 Framework is less prescriptive than the 2013 Framework. This reflects the fact that the SFRS is an established national body. The Framework also challenges the SFRS to explore new ways of working to allow it to contribute an even greater role in the protection of Scotland's communities.
42. The [Scottish Fire and Rescue Service strategic plan 2016-19](#) identified 6 priorities and indicated that these were all of equal importance. These were: improved local outcomes; national and community resilience; modernising response; workforce development; governance and social responsibility; and transformation.
43. Audit Scotland has undertaken two audits of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, firstly in 2015 and then again in 2018.

44. In its [2015 report](#), Audit Scotland found that the Scottish Government and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service managed the 2013 merger of the eight fire and rescue services effectively. It also found that the Scottish Government clearly defined the roles, expectations and initial targets for the Chair and Chief Officer, and the merger followed good practice. There had also been no impact on the public and the Service's performance was improving.
45. In its 2018 update report, Audit Scotland found that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service continued to deliver emergency and prevention services while progressing a complex and ambitious programme of reform.
46. Audit Scotland reiterated its view that the merger had been carried out effectively. It stated that reform had three phases: merger, integration, and transformation. It found that the SFRS had continued to make progress with integrating the resources and different ways of working of the eight former services, and that it was at the beginning of its ambitious transformation programme.
47. The Auditor General stated that the SFRS had laid a strong foundation but should now pick up the pace of reform, as it faced significant challenges, such as investment in the firefighting estate across Scotland and the role of firefighters.⁴
48. In evidence to the Committee the Auditor General said that the SFRS had "...made faster progress in terms of both overall governance and financial management" than the single police service. The Auditor General indicated that part of the reason for this was the inclusive approach adopted by the SFRS, including "... building that sense of confidence and trust with the workforce and with councils across Scotland and in having clarity about the investment that is needed".⁵
49. The Minister for Community Safety, Ash Denham, told the Committee that Audit Scotland's view that the SFRS had managed the merger of the eight fire and rescue services effectively and enhanced scrutiny was positive evidence that the policy intentions of the 2012 Act are being met.⁶
50. The Minister also acknowledged that the SFRS had not faced the same governance challenges as the police service. Ms Denham explained that this was due to a number of factors, including the smaller size of the organisation, stating that "We also have to take into account the fact that there were very different legacy issues. The other difference between the police and the fire service is that the fire service has a much more straightforward organisational model, which has worked well for it".⁷

The role of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Board

51. Section 101 of the 2012 Act introduced a new section 1A into the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 (the 2005 Act) to provide for the establishment of a corporate body for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.
52. Section 101 of the Act also inserts schedule 1A into the 2005 Act, which sets out the SFRS's governance and finance arrangements, general powers, and

- accounting requirements. It also details the composition of the corporate body and indicates that Scottish Ministers will appoint the Chair and Board members.
53. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Board was established on 1 April 2013. The Board currently has 9 members and a Chair, which is below the maximum number of 15 members permitted in the 2012 Act. The SFRS indicated that it plans to increase the Board membership to 14.⁸
 54. The Board provides strategic direction, support and guidance to the SFRS ensuring that it operates effectively and that the Scottish Government's priorities are implemented. Board members are personally and corporately accountable for the Board's actions and decisions. They also scrutinise plans and proposals and hold the Chief Officer and Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) to account.
 55. The Board can establish its own committee structure and delegate responsibilities to such committees as it considers fit. In addition to giving leadership and strategic direction, an important role for the Board is the scrutiny of risk, financial management, and performance.
 56. The Committee considered whether the Board provided strong governance, leadership and direction to the SFRS.
 57. In its 2015 report Audit Scotland found that the SFRS Board was starting to perform well and was committed to continue improving how it performs. Audit Scotland also found that the move to a single service had enhanced scrutiny and challenge of the fire and rescue service. This was demonstrated by the Board members and local senior officers liaising with local authorities.
 58. Audit Scotland [recommended](#) that the SFRS provide Board papers that are timely with an appropriate level of detail. It also recommended that papers should differentiate between operational information and information the Board needed for strategic decision-making.
 59. In its 2018 update report, Audit Scotland found that the Board continued to work well, but needed a clearer focus on performance against its priorities. The report highlighted the real strength in the quality of the Board's discussions and its scrutiny and challenge of management, that the Board and management displayed mutual respect, and that they adopted a constructive tone and genuine shared ownership of the issues facing the SFRS.⁹
 60. In its written evidence to the Committee, the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) raised concerns about governance and scrutiny arrangements. It states that despite the Act and the Framework providing layers of scrutiny arrangements, the SFRS only started the process of proper reporting in response to the 2015 Audit Scotland report.
 61. The FBU also raised a concern that the Board does not have access to independent objective advice and information in respect of operational matters, to enable it to scrutinise the known or potential impact of its decisions on operational matters. The FBU suggest that a forum of lead stakeholders could provide that information.¹⁰

62. Denise Christie, Scottish Secretary of the FBU Scotland, told the Committee that the Board has insufficient knowledge of operational matters and operational experience. To illustrate this point Ms Christie provided an example of the Board's decision to reduce the minimum number of firefighters on an appliance in order to have a safe crewing model to go to a fire or an incident from five firefighters on each fire appliance to five on the first appliance and four on the second. Ms Christie explained to the Committee that experienced firefighters know the impact of reducing that number and that the Board should have taken independent advice to understand the operational implications to enable it to make an informed decision.¹¹
63. Chris McGlone told the Committee that it is the FBU's view that the Board would benefit from including in its membership someone with "knowledge and experience within the operational environment". Mr McGlone suggested that this could be someone with a similar background to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, who is an ex-chief officer.¹²
64. In its written evidence, East Ayrshire Council states that the SFRS Board has been effective, but its level of effectiveness for delivering the proposed transformation programme should be reviewed, stating that "... given the detailed proposals for significant transformation currently being considered, the continued effectiveness of the Fire and Rescue Board to deliver the level of change required, requires to be considered".¹³
65. Dr Darwent, Chair of the SFRS Board, told the Committee that she believes that the Board has the right skills. Dr Darwent explained that the Board had recently recruited 6 new members to strengthen its scrutiny and that the Board has access to expert operational advice from the Chief Officer, Alasdair Hay, the Deputy Chair and two members of the uniformed senior leadership team. Dr Darwent added that the Inspector also attends Board meetings and can provide an additional expert view.¹⁴
66. The Minister for Community Safety told the Committee that she agreed with the Chair's view that there is significant operational expertise and experience available to the Board. Ms Denham added that it is for the Chair to decide what expertise and skills the Board requires and to recruit appropriately, and that additional expertise can be seconded to address specific challenges as and when required.¹⁵

- 67. The Committee agrees with the views of Audit Scotland and others, who have evaluated the merger process, that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Board has managed the merger effectively and demonstrated good governance and management of the Service. The Committee notes, however, Audit Scotland's view that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service needs to pick up the pace of reform to effectively manage significant challenges.**

68. The Committee welcomes the increase in the number of Board members to improve its capacity and capability, and to assist in implementing the proposed transformation programme.

69. The Committee notes the assurances from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Chair and the Minister for Community Safety that the Board has access to the required expert operational knowledge and advice. Nevertheless, since the safety of firefighters is paramount, the Committee recommends that the Board works with the unions to reassess the operational impact of previous decisions, where safety fears have been raised, and going forward seek to reassure staff and officers that the Board is effectively considering the operational impact of its decisions, prior to implementation.

The role of Scottish Ministers

Setting the strategic priorities for, and giving directions to, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

70. Section 101 of the 2012 Act, which introduced a new section 1A into the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 (the 2005 Act), includes powers for Scottish Ministers to set strategic priorities for, and give directions to, the SFRS.
71. The power to direct the SFRS encompassed the Scottish Ministers' existing powers to direct fire and rescue services for public safety purposes, in relation to use of equipment and services, and to issue emergency directions. The new power of direction does not impact on the Scottish Ministers' power of direction where there is a failure to act in accordance with the fire and rescue framework, which is retained as a distinct mechanism for enforcing adherence to the framework. The Scottish Ministers have no power of direction in relation to the Chief Officer.
72. Section 118 states that—
1. The Scottish Ministers may give SFRS general or specific directions.
 2. SFRS must comply with a direction under this section.
 3. Directions under this section may vary or revoke earlier directions under this section.
 4. Directions under this section must be in writing.
 5. The Scottish Ministers must—
 - (a) publish a direction given under this section, and
 - (b) lay a copy of it before the Scottish Parliament.
 6. Nothing in this section enables the Scottish Ministers to give a direction in circumstances to which subsection (3) or (4) of section 41 applies”.

Appointment of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Board

73. The 2012 Act also amends the 2005 Act to include powers for Scottish Ministers to approve the appointment of the Chief Officer, and to appoint the Chair of the SFRS Board and its members.
74. The policy memorandum that accompanied the Bill indicates that the provisions provide a clear separation between the Scottish Ministers and the services by ensuring their role is primarily a strategic one focussed on the appointment of members of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Board and approving the appointment of the Chief Officer.

Financial management

Projected efficiency savings

75. In addition to the policy aims of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Bill, the Scottish Government argued, prior to the reforms, that there was a financial imperative driving reform, with the need to make efficiencies in the face of spending reductions.
76. A major driver of reform of the police and fire and rescue services was the Scottish Government's estimate that the block grant was to reduce over the next four years, from 2011, by £3.3 billion (or 10 per cent) in real terms.
77. The Committee has considered the basis of the Scottish Government's estimated savings by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, whether these were achievable, and the efficiency savings that it has made during its first five years.
78. As with most of the public sector, the police and fire service budgets were expected to reduce over this period. It was estimated that funding for the fire and rescue services would reduce by 12.8 per cent, or £50 million, in real terms over four years.¹⁶
79. The financial memorandum that accompanied the Bill set out estimates of the costs of reform, expected savings and timescales, and the margins of uncertainty. The estimates were developed using the information in the Outline Business Case (OBC).
80. The [financial memorandum](#) estimated that the total net efficiency savings to be achieved through the creation of a single fire and rescue service would be £328 million by the end of 2027-28.

Were the efficiency savings achievable?

81. In its 2015 report, Audit Scotland found that the SFRS had reported net recurring savings of £16.1 million in 2013-14 and had planned further such savings of £6.6 million in 2014-15. It expected to realise £334 million of cumulative net savings by 2027-28, exceeding the £328 million savings estimated in the financial memorandum. Audit Scotland also found that the SFRS had managed its annual budget effectively and had not overspent.¹⁷
82. In its 2018 update report, Audit Scotland indicated that the SFRS had a revenue budget of £264.4 million and a capital budget of £32.5 million for 2018-19. It estimated that this represented a real terms budget decrease of 12 per cent since 2013-14, with the most significant fall occurring between 2013-14.¹⁸
83. Audit Scotland estimated in its [2015 report](#) that due to future cost pressures and the likely reductions in funding the SFRS would have a potential funding gap of £42.7 million in 2019-20. However, in its [2018 update report](#), Audit Scotland found that the

SFRS did not have a funding gap, instead it had a projected potential surplus of £2.7 million in 2019-20. This, in part, was due to its changed VAT status.

84. In its written submission, the SFRS stated that as well as delivering the efficiency savings asked of the Service, it has also achieved significant improvements in front line service outcomes.¹⁹
85. Dr Darwent, Chair of the SFRS Board, told the Committee that “Reform has also allowed us to achieve significant operational and financial efficiencies, and we have been able to take £55.3 million out of our annual cost base on a recurring basis. That is a significant achievement and was part of the ambition of reform”.²⁰

- 86. The Committee notes that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is on target to meet, and potentially exceed, the efficiency savings estimated in the financial memorandum. The Committee further notes that the financial memorandum accurately estimated the anticipated efficiency savings from the creation of a single fire and rescue service.**

Medium and long-term financial planning

87. In its 2015 report, Audit Scotland recommended that the SFRS produce a long-term (five to ten year) financial strategy, as a matter of urgency. The SFRS agreed a long-term financial strategy in December 2017.
88. In its 2018 update report, Audit Scotland found that the SFRS has strong financial management, has developed a good approach to long-term financial planning, and is in a financial position to begin transformation. It described the strategy as “well-considered and structured”, and “a valuable high-level tool for the board to set context for the range of decisions yet to be made in terms of transformation”. Audit Scotland recommended that the SFRS update its medium and long-term financial strategies.
89. Audit Scotland also found that the strategy highlighted that future savings would have to come from the SFRS changing how it provides its services. One of the financial risks identified in its 2018 update report was that the SFRS had inherited an insurmountable capital funding backlog. Audit Scotland stated that the SFRS needed £389 million to maintain and invest in its property, vehicles and equipment and that it would need to transform its current model for delivering services and additional investment to overcome the funding backlog.²¹
90. In evidence to the Committee, Chris McGlone of the FBU, described the next phase for the SFRS as “very risky” as it tries to consolidate its inherited services and equipment, whilst trying to meet the Scottish Government’s aspirations for it to expand and transform.²²
91. In its update report in 2018, Audit Scotland found that the SFRS has confirmed that, with the change to its VAT liability, its 2018-19 budget is enough to allow progress with implementing transformation.²¹

92. In its written evidence, Audit Scotland states that one of the consequences of the creation of the single fire and rescue service was the loss of the ability to reclaim VAT. In November 2017, the Treasury decided to allow VAT to be reclaimed. Audit Scotland say that this change had positive impacts on the finances of the Service, increasing its spending power in 2018-19 by £10 million.²³
93. In its written evidence, the Fire Brigades Union welcomed the assurance by the Scottish Government that the reclaimed VAT money would be given to the SFRS as additional expenditure. It asked for a reassurance that any future reclaimed VAT would be invested year-on-year in the service to enable firefighters to keep the public safe.²⁴
94. In the [2019-20 budget](#), the Scottish Government estimated that the SFRS being able to recover VAT from April 2018 would increase its budget by £10 million.
95. The Cabinet Secretary for Justice told the Committee that if the UK Government had refunded the £175 million VAT paid by Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service "... that would have helped our finances significantly".²⁵
96. The SFRS suggested in its written evidence that the ability to hold a financial reserve would benefit the Service and communities, stating that: "The ability to hold a financial reserve fund to undertake longer term resource and capital planning would be a key change that would benefit the Service and through that communities".²⁶

97. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's long-term financial plan provides clarity on the investment needed to transform the Service. However, the Committee notes the significant capital expenditure needed for the Service to maintain and invest in its property, vehicles and equipment, estimated at £389 million by Audit Scotland, and the view of the Fire Brigades Union that the next phase for the Service is very risky. The Committee asks the Cabinet Secretary for Justice to consider how the financial risks can be addressed.

98. The Committee intends to consider the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's updated medium and long-term financial strategies as part of its future budget scrutiny, to determine how it intends to address the capital investment backlog.

Policy intention: To protect and improve local services despite financial cuts, by stopping duplication of support services eight times over and not cutting front line services

99. The Committee has considered whether each of the three main policy intentions of the 2012 Act had been met.
100. The first aim is to protect and improve local services despite financial cuts, by stopping duplication of support services eight times over and not cutting front line services.
101. The policy memorandum that accompanied the Bill indicated that: “A single service model will drive out duplication, ensure consistency, and rationalise existing systems and structures. Efficiencies will be realised through economies of scale; expertise, capability and budgets will be pooled at a national level then targeted to meet local need”.²⁷

Protecting and improving local services and stopping the duplication of support services

102. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service indicated in its written evidence that it had focussed on protecting front-line services by addressing matters of system, process, technology and property change. It provided a number of specific examples to demonstrate the improvements that it has made, which included:
 103. Investing £688,000 in repurposing its National Training Centre as the SFRS Corporate Headquarters, allowing it to dispose of other unused parts of its estate and reinvest the savings into the front-line.
 104. Undertaken significant investment in developing world class training facilities to ensure that front-line staff are trained to the highest level.
 105. Since 2013-14 the SFRS has invested £44.1 million in its fleet. This includes £25.9 million on new pumping appliances, £4.1 million on high reach appliances, and £1.2 million on water rescue vehicles.
 106. A sustained investment programme in Community Fire Stations to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. This includes expenditure of £23.6 million on improvements across the country since 2013-14.
 107. Investing £26,000 to kit out a ‘Safe and Well house’ to train firefighters and partner agency staff in identifying a wide range of home safety risks including those arising from issues such as sensory impairment and dementia.

108. Investing £4.1 million in service delivery headquarters to maintain strategic operations in all 3 Service Delivery Areas (SDAs).
109. £1.08 million to develop a standard Operational Intelligence system, to ensure the most up-to-date intelligence is available to all front-line crews operating within Wholetime, Retained and Volunteer duty systems, to allow them to better protect property and enhance Firefighter safety.²⁸
110. During the reform process the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service kept open all of its 356 fire stations. However, the Committee received evidence about the impact on the fire and rescue service of its decisions to reduce the number of its firefighters and staff.
111. In its 2018 update report, Audit Scotland found that the SFRS continues to deliver emergency and prevention services while progressing a complex and ambitious programme of reform. The SFRS had responded to 91,139 incidents in 2016-17. These were wide ranging and included road traffic collisions, flooding and water rescue.²⁹
112. In its written submission, Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI) state that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is effective and that there has been little or no impact on front line services through the creation of the single fire and rescue service.³⁰
113. In its written evidence, the FBU indicate that they had been supportive of the creation of the single fire and rescue service, as they were given assurances that it provided an opportunity to protect and increase front line firefighter jobs and capability and that it would protect communities from cuts. The FBU state that they do not feel that this has happened, and as a result, say that "We feel that firefighters and the people of Scotland have been let down".³¹
114. This view was reiterated by Denise Christie, Scottish Secretary of FBU Scotland, who told the Committee that the creation of the single fire and rescue service had impacted negatively on available resources and therefore it had not met the Scottish Government's policy aim of protecting front line services.
115. Ms Christie explained that there had been a "loss of more than 700 front-line firefighters and the closure of five operational fire control rooms". Adding that "On any day, between 60 and 100 fire appliances are unavailable to deal with fire calls, because we do not have enough crews to staff them all the time".³²
116. The Fire and Rescue Services Association (FRSA)ⁱⁱ state in its written evidence that there is a perception that standards have dropped in terms of training and equipment provision, and that the SFRS say that this is due to "budget restraints". The Association provide a recent example where spare appliances were put back into the front line, and when tested were found not to be working. The FRSA added that "There is now a greater difficulty in supplies and PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) with delays becoming the norm".³³

ii Formerly the Retained Firefighters Union.

117. A number of local authorities indicate in their written evidence to the Committee that the fire and rescue services provided within their areas have been maintained since the creation of the single service, and that they have not experienced any cuts.ⁱⁱⁱ
118. East Ayrshire Council indicate that the move to a single fire and rescue service had removed much duplication in how support services are delivered, saying that “Local and national measures show that the fire and rescue service continues to achieve strong performance”.¹³
119. Dumfries and Galloway Council acknowledge that the number of local whole-time fire fighters has reduced, but state that this has not impacted negatively on the ability of the SFRS to respond to emergencies. However, the Council has experienced difficulties in recruiting retained firefighters due to national recruitment campaigns and training staff out-with the local area, as well as challenges with local staffing due to the number of experienced staff retiring following transition to the national service.³⁴
120. West Lothian Council indicated that it has not experienced any cuts in service provision since reform, but added that it has also not seen any significant improvements. The Council raised a concern about the retention and recruitment of retained firefighters in local communities and that this might be exacerbated by the transformation proposals, stating that:
- ” What would also be a concern would be for SFRS to maintain the local tenders and stations but finding that the numbers of firefighters were so low that in fact it breached safety regulations to allow them to fight fires and attend particular calls.³⁵
121. Douglas Scott told the Committee that although there have been resource changes, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in the Borders has been maintained and Scottish Borders Council have been able to hold the SFRS to account.³⁶
122. Simon Routh-Jones, HMFSI, told the Committee that without reform the fire and rescue services would have faced significant cuts and that “certain areas within the legacy services would have struggled to be able to provide a service”.³⁷
123. Alasdair Hay, Chief Officer of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, told the Committee that without the creation of the national service, the service “would have faced a significant cuts agenda” that would have impacted on front line services. Mr Hay explained that prior to the creation of the single service there was support for reform from the conveners of the eight fire authorities. Mr Hay added that, despite a reduction in the SFRS cost base of £55.3 million, no fire stations have been closed, telling the Committee that “It is worth stating that there were 356 fire stations in Scotland prior to the reform process and that there are still 356 fire stations in Scotland”.³⁸

iii East Ayrshire Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, West Lothian Council, and Scottish Borders Council.

Response time targets

124. Dumfries and Galloway Council raise a concern in its submission about response times when specialist equipment is required, stating that "... whilst the immediate response to incidents in rural areas to the West is satisfactory, the potential time to respond with specialist equipment may be significantly delayed in its arrival". The Council add that it hopes that the transformation programme will address this concern.³⁹
125. Orkney Islands Council raise a similar point in its written evidence, indicating that whilst reform had led to improved centralised services "... these are not services which Orkney is likely to benefit from due to the timescales in getting staff and plant to the islands".⁴⁰
126. Denise Christie told the Committee that the FBU want response time targets and response standards re-introduced, for example a response time target for a fire engine leaving a fire station to go to an incident. Ms Christie explained that these targets had previously helped to keep the infrastructure in place and maintain the number of fire stations and firefighting personnel. Ms Christie added that reintroducing targets would ensure that "... the public are being provided with a world-class service and to ensure public safety and firefighter safety".⁴¹
127. Simon Routh-Jones, HMFSI, took a different view, telling the Committee that response time targets do not allow for enough flexibility and identification of risks, saying that:
- ” The service should be based on risk rather than on a prescriptive approach. Moving resources around to meet the risk is far more effective; it is also far safer for the community and for the service itself in delivering that particular function.⁴²

Maintaining front line services

128. The policy memorandum states that it is for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to appoint staff to ensure that it remains sufficiently resourced and able to carry out its duties.⁴³
129. The financial memorandum that accompanied the Bill estimated that redundancy costs would be in the order of £4 million over the first four years of the service. These estimates assumed that any reduction in uniform members could be managed through staff turnover and retirements.⁴⁴
130. In its 2015 report,⁴⁵ Audit Scotland indicated that the number of SFRS staff in post at 31 March 2014 was 8,486 and in its update report in 2018,⁴⁶ that the SFRS employed over 7,800 people.
131. In December 2017, Audit Scotland considered the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's workforce plan, which identified a single Target Operating Model (TOM) for all staff groups, and compared the number of people it employed with the

collective targets of the eight former services. Audit Scotland found that the following staff groups were all below target:

- whole-time firefighters were 3.3 per cent (101 staff) below
- RDS staff were 16 per cent (500 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff) below
- volunteer staff were 40 per cent (161 FTE staff) below
- support staff were eight per cent (65.5 FTE staff) below⁴⁷

Firefighters

132. In its written submission the Fire Brigades Union state that since the creation of the single fire and rescue service the SFRS has reduced the number of wholetime firefighters by 500 and front line retained firefighters by 200.⁴⁸

133. Dr Darwent, Chair of the SFRS Board, told the Committee that it was the SFRS's view that the number of whole-time firefighter roles had reduced by "about 400", as part of its integration agenda. Dr Darwent explained that it is not about the number of firefighters employed, but about the fire and rescue service being able to respond quickly with the appropriate resource, saying that:

” The nature of risk has changed across Scotland. The issue is what we do, which is largely about prioritising where firefighters are most effective, which has to be in prevention.⁴⁹

134. In its written evidence, HMFSI state that the initial workforce planning indicated that the SFRS required a total of 240 officers for its incident command model, which was a reduction of around 85 in the predecessor services. The Inspectorate raised a concern that "... the disposition of these officers around Scotland perhaps creates some inequalities that requires addressing".⁵⁰

135. The Committee notes the variation in the number of whole-time firefighter roles between the SFRS view that the decline is 400 and that of the Fire Brigades Union who say there has been a reduction of 500 whole-time firefighters. The Committee invites the Cabinet Secretary to clarify the accurate number.

Retained and volunteer firefighters

136. The Committee received evidence that, for a variety of reasons, the fire and rescue service has an on-going issue with the recruitment and retention of retained and volunteer firefighters.

137. Retained and volunteer firefighters are people who commit to providing an emergency response within their community. They can be called to attend for duty at their local fire station in response to an emergency. The system relies on the goodwill of the firefighters' primary employers.

138. In its 2018 update report, Audit Scotland found that “Four out of five of Scotland’s 356 fire stations rely wholly, or in part, on RDS or volunteer firefighters”. However, the number of Retained Duty System (RDS) staff had fallen from 3,125 in 2010-11, to 2,870 in 2016-17 and that, on average, 20 RDS or volunteer staff leave the SFRS every month. Audit Scotland stated that the Service is finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain RDS and volunteer firefighters, particularly in remote rural areas, due to changing lifestyles and an ageing population.⁵¹
139. Audit Scotland also considered in its 2018 report the availability of RDS crews in Scotland. It found that they had decreased from 86 per cent in the first quarter of 2015-16, to 82 per cent in the first quarter of 2017-18. It also found that the availability of RDS crews during weekdays was consistently lower than during weekends or evenings. Audit Scotland found that the RDS system is not fit for purpose, saying that “While the availability of RDS firefighters is not an issue that is unique to Scotland, the current RDS model in Scotland is no longer fit for purpose”.⁵²
140. During the Committee’s recent visit to Montrose Fire and Rescue Service, it heard about a number of issues with the RDS system. One issue is the low remuneration not attracting people to the role. Retained firefighters receive a basic pay of £2,993 a year, with additional payments based on an hourly rate, depending on their level of activity. The Committee heard that in Wales, for example, retained firefighters are paid a salary. Another issue is the size of area that retained firefighters can be expected to cover, which they may be unwilling or unable to do, and also the changing nature of the firefighter’s role, which would require an increased training time commitment and additional responsibilities.
141. In its written submission, the FBU refer to two projects that the SFRS has embarked on to consider how to improve the availability of Retained Duty System firefighters and volunteer firefighters to attend incidents, particularly during working hours. These projects are considering barriers to recruitment and retention and developing options to address them. The FBU indicate that it first informed the Committee about these projects in 2015 and that “It is disappointing to say the least that little of any substance has altered in the intervening period”.⁵³
142. The FBU add that to address concerns about an unacceptable number of RDS stations being unavailable during working hours, especially in smaller towns, rural and remote communities “... it is now clear that a long overdue review of the RDS service delivery model must be completed and reported on as a matter of urgency”.⁵³
143. There were a number of suggestions for improving the RDS model within the written evidence provided to the Committee.
144. In its written evidence, the Fire Officers’ Association (FOA) suggest a number of ways to address issues with the recruitment and retention of retained or on call firefighters. These include creating more opportunities for services to be provided by the community for the community, creating wider opportunities for career progression, especially in remote parts of Scotland, creating a transfer policy to move RDS staff to whole-time posts to address staff shortages in some areas, and creating a pathway to allow part-time staff to move to full time posts.⁵⁴

145. In its submission, the Fire and Rescue Services Association describe the work being done to overcome the recruitment and retention of retained firefighters as “inadequate”. It suggests providing a transferable qualification for new recruits to attain, providing more promotion opportunities, and putting in place a package to adequately prepare Retained Firefighters to fill manager roles in local stations. ⁵⁵
146. Alasdair Hay, Chief Fire Officer, acknowledged that there has been a reduction in the number of firefighters and retained firefighters, saying that “It is not that we do not want to recruit retained firefighters; we actively encourage members of the community to join the service, but we have heard about the challenges that we have faced”. ⁵⁶
147. Dr Darwent told the Committee that the SFRS is currently recruiting 105 wholetime trainee firefighters, who are to be allocated to the east, north and west service delivery areas. ^{57 58}
148. The Minister for Community Safety told the Committee that recruitment is an operational matter for the SFRS. However, Ms Denham added that the SFRS is looking at ways to resolve the issue, telling the Committee that: “We know that the system is in need of reform, and the SFRS is looking for opportunities in that respect. The issue is a priority. In particular, the Government supports the fact that the SFRS is currently recruiting whole-time managers in remote and rural areas in an attempt to meet the RDS challenge”. ⁵⁹

149. The Committee believes that, on balance, the creation of a single fire and rescue service has achieved the policy objective to protect and improve local services despite financial cuts, by stopping duplication of support services eight times over and not cutting front line services.

150. However, it is also clear that the current model and contractual framework for the retained duty service is not fit for purpose. Four out of five of Scotland’s 356 fire stations rely wholly, or in part, on RDS or volunteer firefighters. The Committee heard evidence of recruitment and retention challenges, concerns about low pay and pay differentials with RDS services in other parts of the UK, the challenges of broadening the role of firefighters, and the need for improved training, support and career progression opportunities.

151. The Committee notes that the Service has initiated two projects to address recruitment and retention issues, dating back to 2015. The Committee also notes that Audit Scotland recently found that the Service is finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain RDS and volunteer firefighters, particularly in remote and rural areas.

152. **The Committee recommends that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service prioritise, as a matter of urgency, its work to understand and address the barriers to recruiting and retaining volunteer and retained firefighters. The Service should consider the solutions identified in evidence to the Committee, as part of that work.**

153. **The resolution of the retained and volunteer firefighter issue is fundamental to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service being able to continue to provide an effective service across Scotland and, as such, is not simply an operational matter. The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government consider how to address this issue.**

154. **The Committee recommends that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service continue to improve its response times across Scotland, but is not convinced that setting response time targets is necessarily the correct approach, given the geographic area covered by the Service.**

Broadening the role of firefighters

155. The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 implemented significant changes to the roles and responsibilities of the fire and rescue services, making fire prevention a central requirement. The 2005 Act extended the duties of the fire and rescue service to include the promotion of fire safety and providing a response to road traffic accidents. These duties were further extended, in the Fire (Additional Function) (Scotland) Order 2005, to include making provision for Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear (CBRN) incidents, urban search and rescue, and responding to serious flooding and serious transport incidents.

156. The 2012 Act made provision for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to undertake all of these duties.

Emergency Medical Response

157. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service recently concluded its public consultation, [Your Service Your Voice](#), which set out its vision for transforming the Service. The consultation included a proposal to expand the role of firefighters to include providing an emergency medical response. Respondents were asked to agree, disagree, or provide no opinion on the statement that “Firefighters could be trained to take on roles that would reduce the burden on other public services”.

158. The [consultation analysis](#), undertaken by the University of Edinburgh, indicated that 47% of respondents agreed with the statement and 53% disagreed.^{iv 60}

iv The percentage figures were adjusted after the no opinion results had been removed.

159. The analysis includes the following three conclusions in relation to the results on expanding the role of firefighters to include an emergency medical response:
- ” There is a need to allay concerns that the core activity of saving lives in emergency situations, seen as the most important service provided by SFRS almost universally, might be diluted through reform. Perceptions of reform varied across stakeholders and consideration might be given as to whether greater engagement with targeted organisations is required e.g. Scottish Ambulance Service. The public are markedly less confident about the transformation than others, particularly about SFRS involvement in medical emergencies.⁶¹
160. In response to the consultation results, the SFRS is currently working on an action plan for transforming the Service, which includes consideration of whether to broaden the role of firefighters to include providing emergency medical response.
161. In their written evidence to the Committee, the Fire Brigades Union, the Fire Officers’ Association, and the Fire and Rescue Services Association all agree with the proposal for firefighters to be trained to take on roles that would reduce the burden on other public services. These roles could include providing an emergency medical response.
162. However, they raised a number of issues which must be addressed prior to broadening the role of firefighters. These include consideration of the capacity of firefighters to take on additional roles, the potential impact on the core role of firefighters, the additional training commitment required, how pay and conditions will be amended to reflect the broader role, and an evaluation on the impact on the fire and rescue service.

The capacity of firefighters to take on additional roles

163. In its written evidence the Fire Officers’ Association describe the proposal for firefighters to provide an emergency medical response as “extremely beneficial to Scottish communities”, especially to those in rural areas. However, the FOA expressed disappointment that progressing this proposal has been much slower than anticipated, saying that:
- ” Whilst benefits are still to be realised and the SFRS role formally extended, we are sure that significant benefits will be seen in due course; not least, the ability to use the wide distribution of SFRS fire crews across rural areas to saves lives using skills not traditionally associated with the fire and rescue service.⁶²
164. The Fire Brigades Union, in its written submission, refer to emergency medical response trials that were carried out in Scotland, and throughout the UK, in 2016. Following the trials, the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services (NJC) commissioned researchers from the University of Hertfordshire and the College of Paramedics to undertake an evaluation of the trials. Their report highlighted substantial benefits for the public, particularly from cardiac arrest work, but also indicated on-going difficulties with funding, call mobilisation, training, equipment, inoculation, mental health, pay and other issues for firefighters.

165. The FBU expressed a concern about the capacity of firefighters to undertake new roles, such as providing an emergency medical response, responding to terrorist incidents, or providing care services for the aged, stating that:
- ” It is imperative to recognise that firefighters must have the capacity to train and maintain their current core competencies before progressing any expansion into other roles. However, the current YSYV [Your Service, Your Voice] proposals contain no evaluation of the increased call volume, time spent at such incidents, training needs analysis or the time to learn and maintain and update the skills and knowledge required. ⁶³
166. Chris McGlone told the Committee that the FBU does not believe that firefighters currently have the capacity to take on all of these roles, saying that:
- ” ... we just do not believe that there is enough additional standing capacity in a firefighter’s role and in the retained duty system to take on all these additional specialist roles that require specialist qualifications, skills and training. ⁶⁴
167. Denise Christie of the Fire Brigades Union Scotland agreed with this view, telling the Committee that resources were needed for firefighters to take on these roles, saying that “If we are to work with other agencies and open up the firefighter’s role, we must have the proper numbers, resources and infrastructure”. ⁶⁵
168. Stuart Aitken of the Fire and Rescue Services Association (FRSA) explained to the Committee that broadening the role of firefighters was a particular issue for retained firefighters, due to the part-time nature of their role. ⁶⁶
169. In its written submission, the FRSA state that the number of retained firefighters would need to increase to provide adequate staff numbers to take on the additional roles. They indicate that the SFRS is proposing to create approximately 60 full-time RDS posts, but added that:
- ” Put simply, as the situation currently stands there is not enough time for every firefighter to be trained and be proficient in all aspects of the role plus additional expectations from the broadening of the role, especially at stations that already provide specialist response (water rescue etc.). ⁶⁷
170. Chris McGlone explained that although the FBU is in favour of expanding the role of firefighters, any additional roles would need to be reflected in the pay, terms, conditions, and training of firefighters. Mr McGlone welcomed the Scottish Government’s recent additional investment in the draft budget to help and support firefighters to move into other areas. ⁶⁸
171. Dr Darwent, Chair of the SFRS Board, told the Committee that firefighters undertake 300 hours of training each year and that the SFRS believe that this is a sufficient amount of training time for the existing roles of firefighters and for any additional roles. Dr Darwent added that the SFRS is undertaking a training review to ensure that the training being delivered is appropriate for the new roles going forward. ⁶⁹
172. Alasdair Hay, Chief Officer, added that firefighters are already trained to undertake many of the expanded roles, telling the Committee that “We are already training

people to do many of the expanded role tasks that we will ask them to do. The focus is often on emergency medical responses—specifically, responding to out-of-hospital cardiac arrests. All firefighters are trained to perform that role already”.⁷⁰

173. In response to a question about the views of some of the fire and rescue service unions that the current training time provided would be insufficient to undertake any additional roles, Alasdair Hay, Chief Officer, told the Committee that the review of training would consider how to use the training time to best effect. Mr Hay clarified that: “We do not and will never compromise firefighters’ safety by not giving them sufficient training for the tasks that we ask them to take on. Equally, we do not want to compromise public safety”.⁷¹
174. Dr Darwent acknowledged that the SFRS has concerns about the long-term sustainability of the retained duty service, which it has referred to the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services. It is a UK-wide body, which has responsibility for considering national terms and conditions. Dr Darwent added that this situation can make it difficult to resolve concerns locally.⁶⁹
175. Alasdair Hay explained that whilst retained firefighters undertake less training than whole-time firefighters, they have to attain national occupational standards. Mr Hay told the Committee that there is some flexibility in the training system, stating that “It is about training firefighters within those national occupational standards to do the tasks that we expect them to turn out to do on a daily basis for their communities”.⁷⁰
176. Dr Darwent told the Committee that the 2012 Act enables the SFRS to broaden the role of firefighters and that it is working collaboratively with partners, such as the Scottish Ambulance Service, on the SFRS’s transformation proposals. Dr Darwent added that some terms and conditions issues need to be resolved, after which she expects the Service to be able to deliver more services.⁷²

177. There is broad agreement from the fire and rescue service unions to broadening the role of firefighters. Whilst the proposal is welcome, the Committee received conflicting views about the capacity of whole-time, volunteer and retained firefighters to take on any additional roles. The Committee notes concerns that firefighters must have the capacity to train and maintain their current core competencies before taking on any additional roles.

178. The Committee welcomes the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service’s review of its training provision prior to broadening the role of firefighters. The Committee recommends that the SFRS also undertake an evaluation of the capacity of whole-time, volunteer and retained firefighters to take on any additional roles and the impact of taking on these roles on the core services that they provide.

Staff

179. An area for savings highlighted in the financial memorandum that accompanied the Bill was the reduction in the number of fire and rescue service staff. It estimated that the rationalisation of support functions was likely to result in voluntary redundancies of fire and rescue service staff. It estimated redundancy costs in the order of £4 million, spread over the first four years of reform. The financial memorandum also indicated that the current fire and rescue service projections suggested that 30-50% of senior managers were expected to retire over the next three years. ⁷³
180. Audit Scotland found in its 2018 update report that the SFRS had made steady progress with integration. However, it found that the number of support staff in the SFRS was 8% below its target operating model and that some aspects had taken time to be addressed, such as the length of time taken to agree standardised terms and conditions of employment for uniform staff. Audit Scotland stated that "... not having these in place has restricted progress in establishing a fully integrated single service". ⁷⁴
181. Unison indicated in its written evidence that the view of the fire service staff branch is that the Service is not better than it was five years ago. It states that if the SFRS want to deliver on the policy intentions of the 2012 Act, key to doing so will be to ensure that "workers are valued, with good pay and conditions, are respected and listened to, and properly included in decision making". ⁷⁵
182. Derek Jackson of Unison Scotland described to the Committee some of the challenges that fire and rescue staff have dealt with since reform. These include being subject to new terms and conditions and a job evaluation process, travelling further to work due to office closures, the loss of corporate expertise and knowledge due to a reduction in staff numbers, and working in over-stretched services. Mr Jackson stated that the successful transition of the SFRS was due to the dedication and loyalty of its staff, but added that there has been a loss of trust from staff, which has damaged morale. He asked that the staff unions be included in any future restructuring discussions. ⁷⁶
183. In its written submission, the Fire Brigades Union state that since the creation of the single fire and rescue service the SFRS has reduced the number of emergency fire control room staff by nearly a third. It raises a concern that the recent [consultation](#) on proposals to transform the Service did not include "... information of projected staff degradation through retirement or projected future numbers of staff based upon current workload or desired future workload based upon broadened activity". ⁷⁷
184. In its written evidence, the Fire Officers Association raise a concern about the ability of some middle managers to cope with the increasing workload following a reduction in the number of managerial posts. It recommends that the SFRS undertake a job evaluation and job sizing exercise for uniformed staff to determine whether it has the right number of officers available, and in the right location. ⁷⁸
185. Denise Christie told the Committee that the FBU shared concerns about the expanding workloads and increased responsibility of middle managers since reform. Ms Christie explained that this has led to stress and low morale, and recruitment

issues in some areas, saying that “It has been difficult to recruit and retain senior and middle managers in more rural areas”.⁷⁹

186. Dr Darwent, Chair of the SFRS Board, acknowledged that the changes to the Service had been stressful and challenging for staff, and that reducing the number of control centres from eight to three meant that it was inevitable that there would be some difficulties. Dr Darwent added that the benefits had outweighed those challenges, telling the Committee that “We have not had any compulsory redundancies and have been able to retain very large numbers of our staff, and we believe that the fact that we have extremely low turnover in our staff indicates a commitment to the service and an understanding that the service is equally committed to its employees”.⁸⁰
187. Alasdair Hay, Chief Officer, told the Committee that the Service owes a huge debt of gratitude to staff, adding that after five years of on-going reform, 10 years of austerity and significant changes to their pension schemes, people are feeling pressure and suffering from low morale. Mr Hay stated that the cumulative effects needed to be understood “We need to understand the pressures on staff and the wider context. The organisation needs to do what we can, and my plea to the Scottish Government and Parliament is to recognise those challenges”.⁴⁹
188. Mr Hay also told the Committee that the SFRS had just concluded a staff survey, which gave employees an opportunity to contribute directly to the development of the Service. The results were not available, but Mr Hay agreed to provide the Committee with a copy of the survey, once published. In follow-up evidence the SFRS confirmed that the survey results were to be considered by the SFRS Board on 28 March 2019. The Committee was therefore unable to consider the staff survey results as part of its post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.⁸¹

189. The significant changes that are proposed by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will impact on the roles carried out by staff and firefighters. An inclusive and transparent engagement process with staff and firefighters is vital for the SFRS to successfully achieve the transformation of the Service. The Committee notes Audit Scotland’s updated 2018 report about the length of time taken to agree standardised terms and conditions of employment for uniform staff and that this has restricted progress establishing a fully integrated single service.

190. A number of staffing concerns were raised by the fire service unions in their evidence to the Committee. These include a reduction in the number of staff, in particular middle managers. The reduction in managerial posts has led to increased workloads and responsibilities for middle managers, stress and low morale, and a difficulty in the Service recruiting and retaining middle managers in some areas.

191. The Committee notes the staffing concerns raised and asks the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and the Cabinet Secretary for Justice to comment. The Committee understands that the, as yet unpublished, staff survey will be a key indicator of how staff feel about the proposed changes and their level of engagement and inclusion in the reform process. The Committee looks forward to considering the results of the staff survey, once they are available.

192. The Committee notes that it is for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to determine the number of staff that it requires. The Committee recommends that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service undertakes an evaluation of the capacity of its staff to carry out their current roles and the impact that any proposed changes to the roles of firefighters might have on the services that the SFRS staff provide, including any training and support requirements.

Policy intention: To create more equal access to specialist support and national capacity – like flood rescue – where and when they are needed

Access to specialist support and national capacity

193. The policy memorandum that accompanied the Bill indicated that the establishment of a single fire and rescue service was the best way to create more equal access to specialist support and national capacity, where and when they are needed. This included capacity to respond to adverse weather conditions or terrorist threats, flood rescue or access to specialist resources to respond to a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear incident.⁸²
194. In its written evidence the SFRS indicate that ensuring that all the communities of Scotland have equal access to the skills and capacity of the Service is a priority. It highlights areas of improvements that it has made to achieve that aim. This includes greater access to specialist line rescue stations and specialist equipment such as water rescue, as well as improving operation support across Scotland, providing a consistent approach to fire investigation, and access to an enhanced level of specialist advice.⁸
195. Dr Darwent, Chair of the SFRS Board, told the Committee that without reform the Service would have faced cuts, stating that “We believe that the creation of the national service has meant that we have been able to protect our front-line service delivery from potential cuts and that, in many cases, we have been able to improve outcomes, in particular by being able to access on a more reliable basis a much wider range of specialist resources”.³⁸
196. In its written evidence, HMFSI states that its on-going inspections show that the SFRS are operationally effective and more equipped to deal with major incidents, than the previous legacy services. The Inspectorate gives the example of highly trained specialist teams such as water rescue and rope rescue being available throughout Scotland.³⁰
197. However, the Inspectorate also indicate that demand has increased for some of the additional specialist services that firefighters provide, saying that “It is however noted that other emergency special services calls such as Road Traffic Collisions, Water related incidents etc. are unfortunately on the increase and the Service must focus its efforts to deal with this trend”.⁵⁰
198. Simon Routh-Jones, HMFSI, told the Committee that the Service is more able to pre-plan for events and major incidents such as flooding, saying that “Now that there is one service, it can plan far better and has advance knowledge that enables it to move the resources. In the case of flooding, the service can pre-plan and move the resources around”.⁸³

199. The Committee received written evidence from a number of local authorities outlining their positive experiences of accessing specialist support and national capacity.
200. East Ayrshire Council describe in its written evidence the ability to access specialist support through strengthened national capacity as one of the most positive consequences of the 2012 Act, stating that “At a local level we are advised that our local service has been able to call upon support for flood rescue, response to serious incidents and targeted prevention activity”.⁸⁴
201. West Lothian Council, in its submission indicate that “It is good to have the specialist teams, and to have them where they are most needed, should the need arise”.³⁵
202. In its written evidence, Orkney Islands Council refer to the benefits of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Services’ investment in the training facility at Kirkwall airport, saying that “The reduced need to travel to the mainland of Scotland for training will encourage people to apply for the retained fire service. The additional staffing commitment in Kirkwall Fire Station has also been appreciated”.⁴⁰
203. Douglas Scott told the Committee that Scottish Borders Council has been able to access specialist support for non-fire emergencies, such as flooding and that the fire and rescue service has worked very closely with them on a number of initiatives, such as reducing the occurrence of unwanted fire alarm signals. Mr Scott added that “Apart from the localised perspective, the reform has enabled specialist support to come into the Borders”.⁸⁵
204. In its written evidence, the FBU says that it believes that the SFRS has not yet achieved the right balance between national capacity and specialist support provided by firefighters in Scotland. The reason given being the length of time it has taken the SFRS, 5 years, to agree an acceptable solution to the standardisation of firefighters’ terms and conditions, which includes providing a flood rescue service.⁸⁶
205. The Fire Officers Association hold a similar view, stating in its written submission that despite the removal of service boundaries removing barriers to seeking permission for resources to be deployed, progress towards delivering the benefit of distributing resources more evenly across the country has been much slower than expected. They indicate that this is due to the delay in agreeing terms and conditions, saying that “Delays in dealing with the harmonisation of conditions across Scotland have severely hampered the Service’s ability to review and adjust the disposition of operational resources”.⁸⁷
206. In his written evidence, Professor Fyfe indicates that the evaluation results show that access to specialist resources and national capacity is a significant benefit of reform, stating that “Local scrutiny and partnership activities are working well and reform has facilitated a strong, nationally coordinated focus on prevention, partly because of the capacity that now exists nationally to deal with high risk, low frequency incidents”.⁸⁸
207. However, he added that the evaluation responses had also indicated that there had been some negative consequences as a result of achieving this aim, saying that

“Some concerns were expressed regarding the logistics of engaging specialist teams and the risks of de-skilling local firefighters because of a reliance on specialists from out with local areas”.⁸⁹

208. CoSLA indicates in its written evidence that access to specialist support available through the development of strengthened national capacity has been useful to local communities when and where required. However, CoSLA is concerned about the impact of centralised services on rural and island communities, stating that:

” The reforms have led to centralised services, but these are not services which some councils e.g. rural and island councils are likely to benefit from due to the timescales in getting staff and plant to the more remote parts of the country. Recruitment and training also present difficulties for remote island communities.⁹⁰

209. Alasdair Hay, Chief Officer, told the Committee that the creation of a single service had enabled the SFRS to improve its access to specialist resources, for example investing in local training facilities and increasing the number of water rescue assets and their distribution around the country.⁹¹

210. Mr Hay explained to the Committee that the SFRS is a far more intelligence-led organisation than it was prior to reform and that it uses that intelligence to plan how it will deploy the necessary specialist assets around Scotland. Mr Hay gave the example of liaising with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and the Met Office, to determine when and where a storm is likely to impact most on communities.⁹²

211. In response to a question about whether there is a tension between firefighters undertaking their core role and the range of roles a firefighter would undertake in a specialist role, Mr Hay indicated that there are core skills that every firefighter must have, but, if firefighters take on extra roles that will attract additional payments. Mr Hay added that it was his view that there is a limit to the number of skills an individual can have, telling the Committee that “My personal view is that there is a limit, but we need to look at the team and whether it collectively has the skills to be able to deal with the huge variety of incidents that the Fire and Rescue Service is likely to be deployed to”.⁹³

212. The Minister for Community Safety, Ash Denham, told the Committee that with regards to specialist resources “... there is now a much more equitable spread of access to resources across Scotland than there was under the regional system”.⁹⁴

213. The Minister added that the ability of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to respond to major events, such as the fire at Glasgow School of Art or storm Frank, whilst maintaining its coverage across Scotland demonstrated that the national resilience of the fire and rescue service had improved.⁹⁵

- 214. On the basis of the evidence received, the Committee believes that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has made good progress towards achieving the policy objective of creating more equal access to specialist support and national capacity.**

215. **However, the Committee notes the reduction in firefighter numbers and the concerns raised in evidence regarding the impact of the use of specialist teams on the ability of local firefighters to retain their skills, and respond to remote, rural and island communities. The Committee acknowledges that the SFRS and Scottish Government are alert to these concerns. The Committee welcomes, and encourages, the SFRS's approach to locating specialist resources throughout Scotland to address these concerns. The Committee asks the Cabinet Secretary to comment**

216. **The Committee notes that the proposal to broaden the role of firefighters further will increase the number of specialist services that firefighters are to provide and the skills required to do so. The Committee welcomes the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's consideration of how to address these challenges. The Committee asks the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to provide it with an update on the outcome of its consideration of this issue.**

217. **The Committee notes that any changes to the role of firefighters will require new terms and conditions to be agreed. The Committee recommends that the SFRS address this as a matter of urgency, in an inclusive way, to ensure a smooth transition process.**

The right resources in the right place at the right time

218. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service claim in its written evidence to the Committee that "The creation of the SFRS means that it can ensure that it has the right resources in the right place at the right time – we respond to every emergency call that we receive".⁹⁶

219. In its written evidence, the FBU say that this statement is unsubstantiated, as the performance measurements used by the SFRS do not provide the necessary data to verify its claim. They highlight that the performance indicators do not include response or attendance times for any appliances, second or subsequent appliances, the number of crew members on the appliance and/or the type of appliance or vehicle attending.

220. The Fire Brigades Union conclude that: "The FBU therefore cannot countenance what appears to be a "mantra" from senior managers that the SFRS always has "the right resources in the right place at the right time".⁹⁷

221. Mr McGlone of the FBU, recommended the introduction of national standards that can be measured, telling the Committee that "There has to be a proper method of audit and assessment against meaningful performance indicators".²²

222. In its 2018 update report, Audit Scotland found that the available performance measures showed signs of increasing demands on the SFRS since 2013, such as the number of fires, false alarms, and non-fire incidents. However, it also reported that the SFRS had failed to meet the requirement of the 2016 Framework to report outcome-focused performance management information. Audit Scotland indicated that the new performance management framework approved by the SFRS Board contained limited outcome-focused measures and performance targets that required further development.⁹⁸
223. Simon Routh-Jones, HMFSI, told the Committee that reform had enabled the SFRS to be more flexible in allocating its resources, and that its approach to risk assessment supported it in allocating those resources in a way that better served the public, saying that “Now that we have integrated risk management plans, and all the other bits and pieces, services can identify risk and place the elements of the equipment and the resources in the right place”.⁹⁹
224. Alasdair Hay, Chief Officer, acknowledged to the Committee that it is a challenge for the SFRS to have the right resources in the right places at the right time, saying that “We cannot have everything everywhere all the time”.⁷¹
225. Dr Darwent, Chair of the SFRS Board told the Committee that the SFRS had responded to every single emergency call with an appropriate response. Dr Darwent explained that equipment might sometimes be unavailable due to staff numbers or for repair work, but the key issue is that the Service can respond appropriately to every call, saying that “The important issue is whether we can respond in the right way—and quickly—to an incident. We can do so; because of our national footprint, we can breathe in and out and respond as appropriate to incidents that we are required to respond to”.¹⁰⁰

226. The Committee notes that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has responded to every emergency call. However, the Committee is unable to ascertain whether the response, including the time taken, was appropriate in every instance, due to the lack of relevant performance data available.

227. The Committee recommends that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service reconsiders its performance management framework, to ensure that it includes relevant outcome-focused measures and performance targets, to enable effective analysis of its performance.

Policy intention: To strengthen the connection between services and communities, by creating a new formal relationship with each of the 32 local authorities, involving many more local councillors and better integrating with community planning partnerships

228. The policy memorandum that accompanied the Bill indicated that the establishment of a new formal statutory relationship between the fire and rescue service and each of Scotland's 32 local authorities would involve many more elected members and better integrate the fire and rescue service with Community Planning Partnerships.
229. Local authorities were to have a new formal role in shaping the fire and rescue services delivered in their area and in scrutinising and monitoring delivery and performance. This replaced their previous role as a fire and rescue authority. The intention was to enable many more councillors to have a role in shaping local priorities in order to meet local needs.¹⁰¹

Level of engagement by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and its Board

230. The [Year 1 evaluation report](#) found that there was a perception that local engagement by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service was generally working well.
231. In its written submission, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service indicate that local senior officers have built strong local partnership relationships and work with partners and communities to agree the local fire and rescue plans. The SFRS say that this has resulted in more local elected members directly interacting with the Service, adding that: "This ensures we operate in a more visible, open, transparent and accountable manner to local communities than prior to reform".¹⁰²
232. This view is supported by the evidence that the Committee received from the majority of local authorities, which indicates that their level of engagement and input to local fire and rescue service plans for their areas has increased since reform.
233. CoSLA state in its written submission that it believes that the policy intention has been broadly met, as the "Act has enabled SFRS to work effectively with local community planning partners to improve the safety and wellbeing of communities, within budgetary requirements". However, CoSLA added that progress has been hindered by many experienced officers leaving the service when it was reformed.⁹⁰
234. Scottish Borders Council refers in its written evidence to the collaborative approach facilitated by the establishment of its Police, Fire and Rescue and Safer

- Communities Board. The Board's remit is to look more broadly at community safety issues. It is informed by the co-located safer communities' unit within the Council, which includes fire officers, police officers and alcohol and drug partnerships.¹⁰³
235. Douglas Scott told the Committee that the establishment of the Board has resolved issues with decisions being made without the input of Scottish Borders Council, explaining that "We now get an early warning of anything that is coming down the line, so there are no surprises. We are able to work together, working through solutions and reacting to issues".¹⁰⁴
236. In its written evidence, Highland Council state that the Act has improved scrutiny, especially at a local level, and that there is a strong connection between the SFRS and local communities. Highland Council indicate that this has been achieved by extensive consultation by the SFRS on local fire and rescue plans. This approach provides the Council with the opportunity to refine and develop its priorities, and has enabled the full Council to scrutinise the plan. Highland Council also refer to constructive engagement by the local senior officer (LSO), which has included responding positively to the request to provide more localised reports which more accurately reflect the geographic area.¹⁰⁵
237. Highland Council added that embedding community planning within the Act has assisted in prioritising it, and ways to enable greater partnership opportunities should be supported, saying that:
- ” Since the introduction of the Act, the focus of community planning has changed and the SFRS role within it. Any review of the Act should reflect this fundamental shift from participation to leadership and identify the opportunities increased partnership working can support.¹⁰⁶
238. East Ayrshire Council indicate in its submission that the robust local scrutiny mechanisms and engagement arrangements have enabled more local elected members to be involved in scrutiny of fire and rescue services. Adding that the Act has also helped to further develop the Council's partnership arrangements with the Fire and Rescue Service.¹⁰⁷
239. In its written evidence, Aberdeenshire Council provide some examples of the ways in which the Act has strengthened the connection between services and communities and enabled better integration with community planning partnerships. These include the SFRS delivering free local CPR training in local fire stations to local volunteer 'Health Walk' leaders and jointly funding a Community Support and Safety Officer post in Marr. Aberdeenshire Council added that this post is designed to establish better links with vulnerable clients in communities and suggest that it has the potential to be rolled-out more widely.¹⁰⁸
240. However, Orkney Islands Council indicate in its evidence that it does not believe that this policy intention has been met. This is despite an on-going clear commitment from the local senior officers, community planning partnership, and the Council's Police and Fire Sub Committee.⁴⁰
241. In its written evidence, West Lothian Council say that it has not seen any strengthened connection between services and communities as a result of the implementation of the 2012 Act. However, it added that the engagement with senior

fire and rescue service officers has improved. It describes the SFRS as an open, proactive, and engaged partner locally, keen to share knowledge and good practice, saying that "... senior SFRS officers have met regularly with senior executives within West Lothian Council in order to keep them apprised of various steps and forward planning within the planning and transformation process".¹⁰⁹

242. Simon Routh-Jones, HMFSI, told the Committee that the Service has embedded itself within communities and local authorities, and the objective to strengthen relationships had been met. Mr Routh-Jones referred to the practice in some local authorities of embedding local liaison officers within them and suggested that this is an area that could be developed, saying that "It is far better to have a single unit of cross-reference of organisations within one room that can meet on a regular basis and brush ideas and thoughts across each other".¹¹⁰
243. In its written evidence, HMFSI raise a concern about national standards being set by the SFRS, without recognition of the local impact. To illustrate this the Inspectorate provided the example of the increase in a Predetermined Attendance response (PDAs) which increased attendance from two to three appliances to distilleries in remote areas, saying that this was implemented "... with little consideration of the consequences that it would cause to both the Service and Communities involved".³⁰
244. Councillor Elena Whitham, Interim Spokesperson for the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities well-being board and deputy leader of East Ayrshire Council, told the Committee that it was imperative that local police and fire scrutiny forums are able to feed their views to CoSLA, stating that: "At the moment, decisions that have local implications are made at a national level without local input".¹¹¹
245. CoSLA indicate in its submission that it is vital that the role of local representatives in considering how national decisions will impact locally and in scrutinising local fire and rescue plans is recognised and accommodated. This includes ensuring that there is clarity on roles and responsibilities, meaningful dialogue, and that local authorities have access to relevant information, such as performance data.¹¹²
246. Mike Callaghan of CoSLA told the Committee that partnership working, maintaining public confidence and effective performance reporting are key, saying that "It is also about genuine partnership working between the national and local levels and with SFRS and Police Scotland to ensure that national policy priorities do not override local priorities".¹¹³
247. In its written evidence, the FBU states that the SFRS has a closer working relationship with other service providers, saying that "With respect to the connection between services, in line with the Christie commission we believe that there is close working between SFRS and all other services".¹¹⁴
248. In its submission, the SFRS describe some of the ways that its Board engages with local authorities and others. This includes the Chief Officer and Chair of the SFRS Board undertaking an annual series of meetings with local authority partners and partner bodies such as the NHS. The Board also meets in different areas of the country and arranges local engagement events around those Board meetings.¹⁰²

249. Dr Darwent, Chair of the SFRS Board told the Committee that the SFRS undertake visits throughout Scotland to check how the local scrutiny arrangements are working, stating that "... we have visited all the authorities, asked them about their scrutiny arrangements and sat in on many scrutiny committees, and our experience is that significantly more local elected members are involved". Dr Darwent added that "They report to us that they believe that they are doing more effective scrutiny and are more involved in shared decision making, particularly at the community planning forum".¹¹⁵
250. Alasdair Hay, Chief Officer, described to the Committee the value that he places on engaging with firefighters, staff and stakeholders, saying that "We are also engaged in a series of visits. There are 356 stations in Scotland, and I have been to almost all of them over the past five years". Mr Hay added that "As the chief officer, I make it part of my mission to get out and listen to what staff are saying".⁸¹
251. The Minister for Community Safety told the Committee that the 2012 Act has enabled the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to interact effectively with communities, saying that "With regard to the way in which the fire service interacts with local communities, there is good evidence that the 2012 act, especially given the way that the role of local senior officers—LSOs—is enshrined in the legislation, is working very well. It allows connection between local communities, scrutiny from local councillors and so on".¹¹⁶

252. The creation of a single fire and rescue service has achieved the policy objective of involving many more local councillors in making decisions about how fire and rescue services are delivered in their local authority areas. However, whilst the majority of local authorities indicated in their evidence that the objective of strengthening the connection between services and communities had been met, this was not the view of all of the local authorities who provided evidence to the Committee.

253. The Committee recommends that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service consider the evidence that it has received on ways that the Service can further improve its engagement with local authorities and facilitate their input to the decision-making process, to ensure that local impacts are considered when deciding on changes to national policy. CoSLA should also review their role and consider whether they can learn from approaches adopted in other areas to improve their involvement and scrutiny.

Local fire and rescue plans

254. Section 115 of the 2012 Act sets out the arrangements for local fire and rescue services, including the new relationship between the SFRS and each local authority. The new formal role for local authorities is built around the joint development of a local fire and rescue plan.

255. The plan sets out the shared priorities and objectives for the SFRS in the local authority area along with the reasons for selecting these and the outcomes against which these will be measured. It should also include details of how the SFRS will deliver those priorities and objectives and how they will help deliver any other relevant local outcomes identified through community planning. It can also include any other matters linked to fire and rescue services in the local area that the SFRS thinks fit.
256. When preparing the plan, the SFRS must have regard to the fire framework as well as the SFRS's strategic plan. It has a duty to consult SFRS employee representatives, and others as appropriate. It must also submit the plan to the relevant local authority for approval.
257. Each local authority has powers to monitor and provide feedback to the SFRS on how it carries out its functions in its area, it may provide views and make recommendations for improvements in this respect. The feedback may refer to any local fire and rescue plan in force for its area.
258. In its written submission the SFRS indicate that the role of local senior officers and the development of local fire and rescue plans in conjunction with local partners and communities has ensured that it operates in a more visible, open, transparent and accountable manner to local communities than prior to reform.¹⁰²
259. The SFRS state in its submission that for its second iteration of the local fire and rescue plans it adopted a more local approach, by aligning the draft plan more coherently with local outcome improvement plans. The SFRS consulted formally on each local plan, generating over 230 local responses from public and partner organisations. As a result, 94% of Local Outcome Improvement Plans refer to the SFRS. The SFRS say that this demonstrates the level of its local partnership working.¹⁰²
260. In its 2018 update report, Audit Scotland found that the local fire and rescue plans for each community planning partnership were more tailored to local risks than the previous plans and that they were focused on improving outcomes for local people, such as better home safety.¹¹⁷
261. In its written evidence, Highland Council highlight that a benefit of the 2012 Act has been the retention of local priorities within the fire and rescue framework through the development of local plans, with the involvement of local authorities. Highland Council state that this has ensured that "... the SFRS must take account of what is important within a local area and what local communities identify as their priorities". Adding that "Elected Members have had the opportunity to refine and develop the priorities throughout the process, with the draft plans being considered by the Council prior to further public consultation".¹¹⁸
262. Aberdeenshire Council raise a concern in its evidence about its ability to develop innovative practice focused on early intervention and prevention at a local level in the longer-term if the SFRS is too focussed on structures, saying that: "There is a potential risk that too strong a focus on hierarchical structures such as national priorities and community planning structures could constrain the service's ability to focus on needs at a locality level."¹¹⁹

263. Douglas Scott from Scottish Borders Council, told the Committee that its Police, Fire and Rescue and Safer Communities Board meets quarterly to consider at an early stage any proposed changes to national policy that may have a local impact. Mr Scott explained that the Board’s community planning and partnership approach has enabled effective scrutiny of the local fire and rescue service plan as well as the implementation of successful prevention and early intervention initiatives, saying that:
- ” “The Fire and Rescue Service does a lot of work on dwelling fires, and that has expanded into work on making people safer in their homes. Visits to homes have enabled information on vulnerabilities to be linked to other services”. ¹²⁰
264. In evidence to the Committee, Alasdair Hay, Chief Officer said that a key strength of the 2012 Act is the local flexibility that it provides, stating that “A key strength of the legislation is that it recognises that one size does not fit all for scrutiny. It also creates connectivity with legislation on community planning”. Mr Hay added that: “We recognise that, as part of community planning and the creation of local outcome improvement plans, we can make a difference in different ways around the country”. ¹¹⁵
265. Dr Darwent, Chair of the SFRS Board, told the Committee that local plans have enabled local scrutiny bodies to have a greater say in the provision of fire and rescue services in their areas, saying that “The legislation has also ensured that the people we serve have had a greater say in local service delivery through local plan consultation and community planning partnerships, in which we are active participants, and through robust scrutiny by their locally elected representatives”. ²⁰
266. Dr Darwent provided some examples of partnership working between the SFRS, local authorities and others, indicating that some of them could not have been anticipated. One example is the fire and rescue service’s significant role in the Scottish Borders in intervening and helping women to feel safer when they have experienced domestic abuse. Dr Darwent explained that:
- ” “The issue could arise on home fire safety visits or other safety visits but, in the Borders, the fire service is part of the multi-agency public protection arrangements and the relationships to deal with community safety and domestic violence”. ¹²¹

Local Senior Officers

267. Section 115 of the Act requires the Chief Officer, after consulting the local authority, to designate a local senior officer for each local authority area. The local senior officer will be the first point of contact for the local authority and other partners locally. They are responsible for the production of a local fire and rescue plan and the lead officer for the services in community planning. A local senior officer may cover more than one local authority area.
268. The Committee considered whether this role was working as the legislation intended.

269. In its 2018 update report, Audit Scotland found that the SFRS's work with local communities continued to be effective and that it had successfully maintained effective relationships at a local level through local senior officers (LSOs) who liaise with the 32 Scottish councils and community planning partnerships, finding that "The council officers and councillors that we interviewed during our audit consistently said that they valued the enthusiasm and contribution of the LSOs very highly, particularly in relation to their community work on prevention and protection".
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270. In its written submission, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service state that the role of the local senior officers ensures that it remains firmly rooted in local public service delivery. The SFRS indicate that local senior officers are responsible for building strong local partnership working to develop the local fire and rescue plans, as well as supporting local scrutiny committees and leading in community planning.
271. The written evidence that the Committee received from local authorities were very positive about their experiences of working with the local senior officers in their areas.
272. In its written submission, East Ayrshire Council describe their working relationship with the SFRS as "excellent". The Council explains that the LSO is a core member of its Community Planning Partnership Executive Officer Group and makes a valuable contribution across all of its strategic workstreams. The Council adds that this good working relationship is key to the successful transformation of the Service, saying that:
- ” From a position of strength, we are well placed to secure continued effective partnership working in practice and welcome the strategic direction proposed in the separate consultation to further strengthen partnership working to deliver effective reductions in demand for services through preventative approaches.
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273. Highland Council, in its written evidence, indicate that its experience of working with the LSO has been extremely positive. The Council highlight that the legislative requirement for the LSO to be a chief officer ensures that there is engagement at the appropriate senior level, which means that the LSO is able to effectively deal with any issues which arise. The Council adds that the positive approach of the LSO has assisted in this regard, saying that: "The guidance and flexibility around scrutiny arrangements have been helpful but are enabled also by positive attitudes to scrutiny from lead officers".¹²²
274. Dumfries and Galloway Council describe in its evidence the positive resolution of an issue it encountered when the SFRS appointed the local senior officer to cover both Dumfries and Galloway and South Lanarkshire areas, explaining that "One practical example being the availability of the Local Senior Officer to participate in scrutiny-related and Community Planning activities across the two areas".³⁴ The Council indicate that this issue was resolved by the SFRS appointing a local senior officer dedicated to Dumfries and Galloway.
275. Yvonne Beresford told the Committee that the local senior officer for West Lothian also covers the Falkirk area, but that this has not caused any issues, stating that "Communication is working well. There is a change of staff within the ranks below

him, but as ever the communication about who is taking over the new roles, and when, is communicated across the partnership”.¹²³

276. Councillor Vettrains from Fife Council agreed that the role of the local senior officer is working well, adding that the transformation proposal consultation was undertaken very effectively. Councillor Vettrains told the Committee that “As a society, we should be excited about some of the proposals for the fire service. They are meaningful, they are long overdue and they will improve the service”.¹²⁴
277. Denise Christie from the Fire Brigades Union Scotland suggested that more autonomy for local senior officers would enable them to respond to the particular incidents and initiatives in their areas, telling the Committee that “There needs to be more local autonomy but, in order to have that, people must have the budget responsibility and the freedom to use it”.¹²⁵
278. Douglas Scott, from Scottish Borders Council, agreed that the direction of travel is that the SFRS need to look at devolution of budgets to local senior officers, but should consider the risks before doing so, saying “We have to ensure that the specialist resources and so on are there”.¹²⁶
279. Simon Routh-Jones, HMFSI, told the Committee that there now needs to be a more local delivery element within the Service, with a lot more autonomy for the local senior officers. Mr Jones suggested that the SFRS consider how this can be done, in a balanced way, which does not move towards a number of single fire services, stating that:
- ” “With regard to policy, certainly, there now needs to be a releasing of the reins. It is right and proper that, where the services are meeting a different need within the community, there will be a need for a different policy, but I think that there will be mainstream policies and some slight variance from those in the local plans”.¹²⁷
280. Dr Darwent, Chair of the SFRS Board, told the Committee that feedback from local authorities indicated that engagement on the local plan has enabled the SFRS to adapt local service delivery models and interventions, and contribute to local outcome improvement plans. Dr Darwent added that this has resulted in better local outcomes at community level, saying that “The only way that we know that we can do that, as a national service, is through strong and frequent engagement, which is what we are prioritising”.¹²⁸
281. The Minister for Community Safety, Ash Denham, told the Committee that the legislation enables the fire and rescue service to provide a consistent service nationally, whilst providing enough leeway to tailor services to meet local priorities. Ms Denham added that the local senior officers assist in this regard, telling the Committee that:

” The LSOs, which I mentioned earlier, can develop tailored local plans in conjunction with all local partners and communities in order to meet the needs of those local communities. I think that most people would agree that, as a direct consequence of the way in which the national service is working, local elected members now interact much more with the service than they ever did before. The local aspect is coming through much more—the service needs to be clear and accountable, but there is leeway for the LSOs to develop plans and respond directly to local priorities.¹²⁹

282. On the balance of the evidence that it has received, the Committee finds that, in the main, local authorities now have more input to local fire and rescue service provision in their areas. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service’s commitment to partnership working has contributed to achieving this aim. Maintaining this approach and building on existing relationships will be key to the Service successfully achieving its ambitious transformation agenda.

283. The Committee recommends that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service considers how to provide greater autonomy to local senior officers, to enable them to more fully respond to the priorities within their local areas.

Achieving transformation

284. The 2016 Fire and Rescue Framework includes a strategic priority for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to explore, through service redesign, new and innovative ways in which it can improve the safety and well-being of communities.
285. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service set out its ambition for transforming its services in its recent public consultation, *Your Service Your Voice*. It is currently considering the consultation responses and working on an action plan to transform the Service.

Managing the transformation process

286. In its written evidence, the Fire Officers' Association welcomes the proposals to broaden the role of firefighters to include providing an emergency medical response and arrangements for marauding terrorist firearms attacks, as part of the transformation of the Service.⁶²
287. The Fire and Rescue Services Association, in its submission, also welcome the introduction of both roles for firefighters, indicating that the additional roles might make up for the reduction in wages experienced by retained and on call firefighters due to the fall in emergency calls, saying that "The introduction of EMR calls for our members will help to overcome this shortfall and make the service an attractive proposition to a wider pool of potential recruits".¹³⁰
288. In its written submission, the Fire Brigades Union raise a concern that the direction of travel in the SFRS consultation "poses significant risks for firefighters and public alike".¹³¹ The FBU opposes a number of the proposals in the consultation, including: introducing shift systems for firefighters which diminish the level of cover at night or extend working hours during the day; the introduction of reduced crewing on fire appliances; the introduction of "rapid response units" (RRUs) or other vehicles to substitute for fully equipped and staffed fire appliances; a reduction in the number of staff or firefighters; and any further reductions of operational fire control rooms. The FBU recommend that the SFRS carry out a risk assessment of its proposals, including reasonable worst-case planning scenarios.
289. Alasdair Hay, Chief Officer, explained to the Committee that the SFRS is introducing the use of rapid response units with high-pressure injection systems, as they can reduce the temperatures of fires more quickly and require fewer firefighters. Mr Hay added "We understand the challenge relating to the reduction in the number of firefighters, but the system is built on providing a safe system of working".¹³²
290. CoSLA suggests in its written submission that during the proposed transformation of the Service that governance and local accountability will play a key role in maintaining the strengthened connection between services and communities. It states that the transformation must provide opportunities for continued prevention and early intervention work, whilst maintaining the current local service provision, with no increased risk to safety.¹³³

291. In his written evidence, Professor Fyfe indicates that the SFRS is now focussing on transforming the service, having largely completed the integration and consolidation phases of reform. This involves consideration of the future roles and expectations of firefighters, with the focus shifting from reactive activity to prevention and a broad concern with health, safety and well-being of vulnerable populations.¹³⁴
292. A key element of the SFRS's transformation strategy is the proposal that firefighters take on additional roles, such as providing an emergency medical response, providing care services for older people, and a response to terrorist incidents. Whilst the evidence received by the Committee suggests that there is broad support for broadening the role of firefighters, a number of issues were raised which would need to be addressed prior to implementation.
293. Denise Christie, Scottish Secretary of the FBU Scotland, told the Committee that the foundations need to be in place, such as detailed policies, before the single fire service can move in another direction. Ms Christie highlighted the 5 years that it had taken to agree the existing terms and conditions of firefighters, saying that "To open up a role map and ask firefighters to take on other responsibilities, we must go through a negotiation process and ensure that the resources and training are there for firefighters to succeed in that".¹³⁵
294. Stuart Aitken, of the Fire and Rescue Services Association, told the Committee that retained firefighters are a valuable and highly motivated resource, but they are overworked and underfunded. Mr Aitken suggested that at the forefront of any future plan there should be "a coherent and credible plan going forward to address the retained service and recruitment and retention".¹³⁶
295. Derek Jackson told the Committee that restructuring had led to services being over-stretched and asked that going forward Unison Scotland be included in any restructuring discussions. Mr Jackson said that the union wanted to be reassured that its voice was being heard and provided the Committee with a previous example where the union had been invited to a Board meeting to discuss an issue that has already been decided, stating that: "I would like unions to be more involved in restructuring, to get an insight into what is happening and even to give our opinion on things".¹³⁷
296. In its 2018 update report, Audit Scotland highlight a number of areas that the SFRS should address as part of its transformation process. These include providing a comprehensive workforce plan for the future service, finalising a single target operating model for RDS and volunteer firefighters, and agreeing new terms and conditions for firefighters. Audit Scotland describe gaining agreement of terms and conditions as challenging, but critical, concluding that "Successful conclusion of these negotiations is critical to allow transformation to progress".¹³⁸
297. The Auditor General told the Committee that despite the proposed implementation of significant changes, the SFRS had laid some very strong foundations, such as a sense of confidence and trust with the workforce and with local authorities, as well as identifying the required investment.⁵
298. Dr Darwent, Chair of the SFRS Board, told the Committee that the 2012 Act enables the Service to broaden the role of firefighters and that it is working closely with the trade unions and partners, such as the Scottish Ambulance Service, on its

transformation proposals. Dr Darwent acknowledged that some terms and conditions issues were still to be resolved, after which she expected the SFRS to be able to deliver more services, saying that “Some terms and conditions issues need to be resolved, and we will be delighted when that finally happens not only because it will allow us to deliver more but because we will be able to pay our firefighters more to deliver those services”.¹³⁹

299. The Committee recognises that the dedication, loyalty and hard work of firefighters and staff during a period of significant change is responsible for the many successes of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, and that they are critical to its successful transformation.

300. The Committee notes the evidence it received that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service must put the necessary foundations in place, such as detailed policies, training and resources before taking the Service in another direction. The Committee asks the Cabinet Secretary for Justice to review across the relevant sectors whether these essential elements are in place ahead of the proposed transformation of the Service.

301. To maintain the trust and confidence of firefighters and staff, the Committee recommends that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service fully involve all of the organisations representing those working for the Service in discussions on its future.

302. The Committee recommends that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service undertake a risk assessment of its transformation proposals, including how it will address the workforce planning issues identified by Audit Scotland.

Annex A

Extracts from the minutes of the Justice Committee and associated written and supplementary evidence

5th Meeting, 2018 (Session 5) Tuesday 6 February 2018

Work programme (in private): The Committee considered its work programme and agreed (a) to consider at a future meeting its approach to scrutiny of the police and fire services; [...]

10th Meeting, 2018 (Session 5) Tuesday 20 March 2018

Police and fire and rescue services (in private): The Committee agreed its approach to its future scrutiny of the police and fire and rescue services.

18th Meeting, 2018 (Session 5) Tuesday 12 June 2018

Work programme (in private): The Committee considered its work programme and agreed [. . .] (b) potential witnesses for future evidence sessions on post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.

23rd Meeting, 2018 (Session 5) Tuesday 18 September 2018

Post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012: The Committee took evidence, in round-table format, from—

Chief Superintendent Ivor Marshall, President, Association of Scottish Police Superintendents;

Councillor Elena Whitham, Spokesperson for Community Wellbeing, and Mike Callaghan, Policy Manager, COSLA;

Denise Christie, Scottish Regional Secretary, Fire Brigades Union Scotland;

Sandy Brindley, Chief Executive, Rape Crisis Scotland;

Professor Nick Fyfe, Founding Director, Scottish Institute for Policing Research.

Written evidence

- Association of Scottish Police Superintendents
- COSLA
- Fire Brigades Union Scotland
- Rape Crisis Scotland
- Professor Nick Fyfe, Scottish Institute for Policing Research

24th Meeting, 2018 (Session 5) Tuesday 25 September 2018

Post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012: The Committee took evidence from—

Councillor Ross Vettraino, Convener, Environment, Protective Services and Community Safety Committee, Fife Council;

Yvonne Beresford, Policy and Performance Officer, West Lothian Council;

Chief Superintendent Campbell Thomson, Divisional Commander, 'A' Division, Police Scotland;

Caroline Gardner, Auditor General for Scotland, Audit Scotland;

Gill Imery, HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland.

Written evidence

- Audit Scotland
- HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland
- Police Scotland
- West Lothian Council

Written evidence

- Scottish Police Authority

Supplementary written evidence

- Police Scotland
- Scottish Police Authority
- Scottish Police Authority

26th Meeting, 2018 (Session 5) Tuesday 23 October 2018

Post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012: The Committee took evidence from—

Chief Superintendent Ivor Marshall, President, Association of Scottish Police Superintendents;

Stuart Aitken, Acting Chair for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Fire and Rescue Services Association;

Chris McGlone, Executive Council Member, Fire Brigades Union;

Calum Steele, General Secretary, Scottish Police Federation;

Derek Jackson, Branch Secretary, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Branch, Unison Scotland.

Written evidence

- Fire and Rescue Services Association
- Scottish Police Federation
- Unison Scotland

Supplementary written evidence

- Fire Brigades Union Scotland

27th Meeting, 2018 (Session 5) Tuesday 30 October 2018

Post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012: The Committee took evidence from—

Chief Constable Iain Livingstone, Police Scotland;

Susan Deacon, Chair, Scottish Police Authority;

Alasdair Hay, Chief Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service;

Dr Kirsty Darwent, Chair, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Board.

Written evidence

- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Board

Supplementary written evidence

- Police Scotland
- Scottish Police Authority
- Scottish Police Authority

28th Meeting, 2018 (Session 5) Tuesday 6 November 2018

Post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012: The Committee took evidence from—

Simon Routh-Jones, HM Chief Inspector, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, HM Fire Service Inspectorate in Scotland;

Douglas Scott, Senior Policy Adviser, and Graham Jones, Safer Communities and Community Justice Manager, Scottish Borders Council;

Kate Frame, Commissioner, and John McSparran, Head of Investigations, Police Investigations and Review Commissioner;

Diego Quiroz, Policy Officer, Scottish Human Rights Commission.

Written evidence

- HM Fire Service Inspectorate in Scotland
- Scottish Borders Council
- Police Investigations and Review Commissioner
- Scottish Human Rights Commission

Supplementary written evidence

- HM Fire Service Inspectorate in Scotland
- Scottish Borders Council
- Police Investigations and Review Commissioner
- Police Investigations and Review Commissioner

29th Meeting, 2018 (Session 5) Tuesday 13 November 2018

Post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012: The Committee took evidence from—

Humza Yousaf, Cabinet Secretary for Justice, and Ash Denham, Minister for Community Safety, Scottish Government.

Post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 (in private): The Committee reviewed the themes emerging from the evidence received in order to inform the drafting of its report to the Parliament.

Written evidence

- Scottish Government

Supplementary written evidence

- Scottish Government
- Scottish Government
- Scottish Government

5th Meeting, 2019 (Session 5) Tuesday 5 February 2019

Post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 (in private): The Committee considered a draft report. Various changes were agreed to and the Committee agreed to continue consideration of the draft report at its next meeting.

6th Meeting, 2019 (Session 5) Tuesday 19 February 2019

Post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 (in private): The Committee considered a draft report. Various changes were agreed to and the Committee agreed to continue consideration at its next meeting.

8th Meeting, 2019 (Session 5) Tuesday 5 March 2019

Post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 (in private): The Committee continued its consideration of a draft report. Various changes were agreed to and the Committee agreed to continue consideration at its next meeting.

9th Meeting, 2019 (Session 5) Tuesday 12 March 2019

Post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 (in private): The Committee continued its consideration of a draft report. Various changes were agreed to and the Committee agreed to continue consideration at its next meeting.

10th Meeting, 2019 (Session 5) Tuesday 19 March 2019

Post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 (in private): The Committee continued its consideration of a draft report. Various changes were agreed to and the Committee agreed its report to the Parliament.

Written submissions on the Post-Legislative Scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012

The following [submissions](#) can be view online:

- Aberdeenshire Council (J/S5/18/PFR/6) (221KB pdf)
- Anonymous 1 (65KB pdf)
- Anonymous 2 (175KB pdf)
- Apex Scotland (70KB pdf)
- ASAPNHS (J/S5/18/PFR/11) (149KB pdf)
- Association of Scottish Police Superintendents (154KB pdf)
- Audit Scotland (J/S5/18/PFR/4) (289KB pdf)
- Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (13KB pdf)
- COSLA (J/S5/18/PFR/8) (95KB pdf)
- Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (18KB pdf)
- Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (supplementary submission) (73KB pdf)
- Dumfries and Galloway Council (153KB pdf)
- East Ayrshire Council (114KB pdf)
- Fire and Rescue Services Association (82KB pdf)
- Fire Brigades Union (573KB pdf)
- Fire Brigades Union (supplementary submission) (8KB pdf)
- Fire Officers Association (134KB pdf)
- Fyfe, Professor Nick, SIPR and University of Dundee (198KB pdf)

- Harper, Karen (J/S5/18/PFR/1) (137KB pdf)
- HM Fire Service Inspectorate (157KB pdf)
- HM Fire Service Inspectorate (supplementary submission) (93KB pdf)
- HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (281KB pdf)
- Highland Council (177KB pdf)
- Johnstone, William (J/S5/18/PFR/12) (22KB pdf)
- Kidd, Alexander (89KB pdf)
- Law Society of Scotland (143KB pdf)
- Livermore, Roger (J/S5/18/PFR/9) (74KB pdf)
- Malik, Dr Ali (J/S5/18/PFR/5) (152KB pdf)
- McBride, Dr Pauline, University of Glasgow (237KB pdf)
- McKerrell, Dr Nick, Glasgow Caledonian University (177KB pdf)
- McMillan, Andrew (69KB pdf)
- Munro, Stewart (96KB pdf)
- Murphy, Professor Peter, Nottingham Trent University (130KB pdf)
- Murray, Dr Kath (J/S5/18/PFR/3) (187KB pdf)
- Orkney Islands Council (74KB pdf)
- Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (79KB pdf)
- Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (supplementary submission) (68KB pdf)
- Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (supplementary submission) (188KB pdf)
- Police Scotland (286KB pdf)
- Police Scotland (supplementary submission) (75KB pdf)
- Police Scotland (supplementary submission) (110KB pdf)
- Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee (J/S5/18/PFR/7) (226KB pdf)
- Rape Crisis Scotland (144KB pdf)
- Retained Firefighters Union (121KB pdf)
- Safe Glasgow Group (147KB pdf)
- Scottish Borders Council (J/S5/18/PRF/2) (69KB pdf)

- Scottish Borders Council (supplementary submission) (J/S5/18/PRF/2a) (102KB pdf)
- Scottish Chief Police Officers Staff Association (126KB pdf)
- Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (73KB pdf)
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (259KB pdf)
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Board (99KB pdf)
- Scottish Government (315KB pdf)
- Scottish Government (supplementary submission) (76KB pdf)
- Scottish Government (supplementary submission) (77KB pdf)
- Scottish Government (supplementary submission) (81KB pdf)
- Scottish Human Rights Commission (250KB pdf)
- Scottish Police Authority (105KB pdf)
- Scottish Police Authority (supplementary submission) (235KB pdf)
- Scottish Police Authority (supplementary submission) (250KB pdf)
- Scottish Police Authority (supplementary submission) (162KB pdf)
- Scottish Police Authority (supplementary submission) (120KB pdf)
- Scottish Police Federation (25KB pdf)
- Scottish Women's Aid (275KB pdf)
- Unison Scotland (150KB pdf)
- Unison Police Staff Scotland (284KB pdf)
- Unison Police Staff Scotland (supplementary submission) (129KB pdf)
- UK National Preventive Mechanism and HMICS (75KB pdf)
- Victim Support Scotland (69KB pdf)
- West Lothian Council (99KB pdf)
- Yeoman, David (84KB pdf)

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