Justice Committee

Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Bill

Written submission from David Baldwin

I wholeheartedly accept the need to rationalise our Police and Fire Services and feel that the Scottish Government's proposals are a step in the right direction. I do, however, feel that it is imperative that local input and control is retained and that the current power of local Police Boards etc. and their overseeing function is not diluted in any way. I am no expert on legislation or the inner workings of the police or fire services, but I would hope that those who are will take local accountability seriously and that its needs are fully reflected in the bill which eventually receives royal assent.

On a separate matter, I would very much hope that both the Parliament and Government amend the bill so that the names of The Scottish Policy authority, the Police Service of Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service are included in English and Gaelic, as is the case for Creative Scotland. It is vital that new, nationwide bodies such as these embrace the Gaelic Language Act and the increasing place that Gaelic has in wider Scottish Society. I would expect branding for both of these new bodies to afford equal weight to Gaelic and English, including vehicle branding.

I also wholeheartedly support the location of the new service HQs outwith Edinburgh or Glasgow. It is important that all of Scotland benefits from the jobs and status that HQs bring. Tulliallan may be a good choice for the new police force, however a city like Inverness would be an excellent choice for the fire service HQ and would demonstrate the Government’s commitment to spreading the benefits for public jobs and services throughout Scotland.

I trust that my points will be taken into consideration.

David Baldwin
23 January 202