Committee will wish to explore with you the issues which may need to be considered in the transfer of fire and rescue staff, and potentially some associated local authority staff, from the employment of joint fire boards to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, or the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Board; and whether there are any existing local variations, or employment agreements, which should be taken into account in the transfer of staff to the new service.

In relation to the questions being asked by the Local Government and Regeneration Committee the FBU would like to make the following points:

1. The need to harmonise the conditions of service of our members is and will be a huge issue for the union. At this time we are engaged with the Scottish Government and the service with fire reform and this is taking the shape of partnership working on a number of areas, the subjects that have been identified are shown below.
2. The FBU are working with management on all of these subjects however at this stage we have not discussed or agreed how we will settle any disagreements as we move forward. We have access to the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire Services however these systems are more designed for individual services and not for issue that might arise with the amalgamation of 8 to 1. We will be discussing with the service in the near future what processes we will require to assist any issues. The Government have been helpful by indicating that TUPE will be used for transfer of staff and that the NJC will still be the arena for discussions on major conditions of service (pay, leave etc)

3. Statements have been made by the Minister that no change to the local agreements will be made and that these will be for the new board and Chief Fire Officer to determine in good time. This gives our members the assurances that are need in that a firefighter from Aberdeen will not be detached to Dumfries or that an officer from Strathclyde is not sent to Edinburgh to take charge of an incident on day one and not before proper discussion and agreement from the union has taken place.

4. We do think that it is reasonable for local agreements and conditions to be transferred on day one and we look for a commitment for negotiations around these matters to be taken up by the new board with a view to harmonisation threw agreement.

5. There are currently some specific variations in the provision of, and access to training that the FBU believe need to be addressed urgently. This is an early opportunity for the benefits of a national service to be realised in terms of maintaining a consistent approach to the safety of staff.

6. Duty systems and crewing arrangements vary by service as does additional responsibility allowance and continued professional development, all of these will need to be addressed by the reform team. Some may have to be done after the new service starts and some before.

I hope these points go some way to informing the committee of the unions view and would welcome the opportunity to expand on these where need.

FBU
February 2012
Fire Brigades Union Scotland
The Voice of Professional Firefighters & Emergency Fire Control Operators

The Fire Brigades Union is a politically non-affiliated trade union that represents professional Wholetime, Retained, Auxiliary, & Volunteer Firefighters, Middle Managers and Emergency Fire Control Operators in Scotland - over 90% of the services uniformed personnel.

Fire Brigades Union officials are available to all sections of the community, to advise on any issue relating to Fire & Rescue Service and public fire safety matters. Our role is not only to serve our members but, as the voice of professional firefighters, to ensure that the public get the best possible emergency fire & rescue service throughout Scotland that they rightly demand & deserve.

Fire Brigades Union: Scottish Officials

Roddy Robertson
Executive Council Member, Scotland
Mobile: 07801-047-601
E-mail: roddy.robertson@fbu.org.uk

John Duffy
Scottish Secretary
Mobile: 07801-047-618
E-mail: john.duffy@fbu.org.uk

Alan Paterson
Scottish Chair
Mobile: 07801-047-608
E-mail: alan.paterson@fbu.org.uk

Paul Wilson
Scottish Treasurer
Mobile: 07766-314-771
E-mail: paul.wilson@fbu.org.uk

Jim Malone
Scottish Organiser
Mobile: 07801-047-613
E-mail: jim.malone@fbu.org.uk

Fire Brigades Union Scotland
52, St Enoch Square,
Glasgow G1 4AA
TEL: 0141-221-2309
FAX: 0141-204-4575
E-mail: region01@fbu.org.uk
www.fbuscotland.org