Post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012

Call for evidence

Call for written views

The Scottish Parliament’s Justice Committee is undertaking post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012. Five years after Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service began operating the Committee wishes to scrutinise whether the policy objectives of the 2012 Act have been delivered, and if not, the reasons for this.

The 2012 Act created a single police service and a single fire and rescue service, replacing the eight police forces and eight fire brigades that had existed previously.

The creation of Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service introduced the biggest reform of the police and fire services since the Parliament’s inception.

The 2012 Act includes provision for new national governance arrangements as well as arrangements for the scrutiny, oversight and funding of the police and fire and rescue services. It provides the statutory framework for bodies such as the Scottish Police Authority, the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS). The 2012 Act sets out powers for local authorities in relation to the provision of fire and rescue services and the policing of their areas.

The 2012 Act also made provision for the transfer of existing officers and staff and the appointment of new officers and staff to both services, and sets out arrangements for complaint and investigation procedures.

The Scottish Government’s three main policy intentions in promoting the 2012 Act were—

- To protect and improve local services despite financial cuts, by stopping duplication of support services eight times over and not cutting front line services;
- To create more equal access to specialist support and national capacity – like murder investigation teams, firearms teams or flood rescue – where and when they are needed; and,
- 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. ¹

The Committee is to consider the whole of the 2012 Act, including the oversight and scrutiny bodies detailed within it: the Scottish Police Authority, Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) and the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC). It will consider how the legislation is being enacted,

¹ See further the Policy Memorandum accompanying the Bill for the 2012 Act, setting these out in more detail:
http://www.parliament.scot/S4_Bills/Police%20and%20Fire%20Reform%20(Scotland)%20Bill/Policy_Memo.pdf
if there are any unintended consequences, and identify any improvements that could be made.

The remit for the Committee’s post-legislative scrutiny is to consider whether:

- the policy intentions of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 have been realised and are being delivered; and whether
- any further policy or legislative changes are required to improve the effectiveness of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.

Questions

You are invited to submit written views to the Justice Committee on the above remit and the following questions:

**Police service**

1. In your view, what have been the consequences of the 2012 Act for the police service? Please set out your views on (a) any benefits and (b) any negative consequences of the 2012 Act for the police service.

2. Have the policy intentions of the 2012 Act in relation to the police been met?

**Fire and rescue service**

3. In your view, what have been the consequences of the 2012 Act for the fire and rescue service? Please set out your views on (a) any benefits and (b) any negative consequences of the 2012 Act for the fire and rescue service.

4. Have the policy intentions of the 2012 Act in relation to fire and rescue been met?

**Other issues**

5. Are there any other issues you would like to raise in connection with the operation of the 2012 Act?

Please note that it is not necessary to answer every question and you can also provide any other information that you consider to be relevant to the remit.

It is important to point out that the Committee is seeking views on the provisions of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012. It recognises that for some their views of the police and/or fire services will be informed by their personal experiences. In responding to the call for views you may however wish to note that the Committee will not become involved in or investigate individual cases or specific complaints. In those circumstances you may wish to focus your written evidence on whether the policy intentions of the 2012 Act are being delivered.

**Submitting evidence**

The deadline for sending written submissions is **5.00 pm on Thursday 24 May 2018**.
Before submitting evidence to the Committee, you should read and accept the Scottish Parliament’s policy on the treatment of written evidence. In line with this policy, submissions would normally be published on the Parliament’s website.

Those submitting evidence are invited to restrict their submission, if possible, to the equivalent of approximately four sides of A4. Evidence should be submitted in electronic format (preferably in MS Word) by email to: justicecommittee@parliament.scot

Organisations and individuals who do not have access to a PC and/or the internet may submit a hard copy submission to:

Clerk to the Justice Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh  EH99 1SP