I wish to take part in the consultation, as a concerned member of the public. My experience as a format Senior Fire Officer and National Committee (UK and Scotland) with almost 32 years’ service have provided me with the knowledge and understanding to assist with this consultation. I was as were ALL my Police and Fire Service colleagues totally against the 2012 Act and gives me absolutely no pleasure in taking part in this consultation after five disastrous years where the 2012 Act has destroyed the Police and Fire Service in Scotland.

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

I can see no benefit as a consequence of the 2012 Act.

(b) any negative consequences of the 2012 Act for the police service

1. An infective Management Structure which is remote, centralised and inflexible, it cannot effectively deal with the day to day running of the Police Service across Scotland. The Guns on Routine Duties and Stop and Search policies which were forced on the public across the country are clear evidence of this.

2. The Governance by the new SPA has been completely shambolic and has been incapable of effectively overseeing the Police Force on many occasions. Again the Gun on Routine Duties and Stop and Search policies have identified this.

3. The SPA have not controlled 3 Chief and acting Chief Officers so far and resorted to behind closed doors meetings to try to resolve issues which calls onto question the whole SPA structure and it’s transparency.

4. The committee far too small in number and is not representative of the public it is tasked with representing. The members are not elected but professional volunteers which has to date created a huge structural deflect in running our police force.

5. The bringing together of the 8 previous police forces which are nationally funded meant 5 years of VAT, which will never be refunded and has wasted millions of pounds of public money.

6. The true capital and revenue cost of binging together the 8 services has not yet been publicised.
7. The 2012 Act in bringing the 8 services together was meant to produce cost savings and efficiencies. These savings have not been met and the Single Police service is millions in the red.

8. The Single Police Service has become a national example for the rest of the UK not to consider centralisation.

9. The Single Police Service in Scotland is incapable of representing local needs and locally targeted policies. Its one size fits all national governance and management have meant there is no local effective input into police policy, structure or direction. The local committee meetings are incapable of impacting on local policing. Guns on Routine Duties are a glaring example if this where many North of Scotland Armed Police Officers hide in offices or their cars still wearing the Guns every day.

10. The moral of the National Police Service is at an all-time low, with sickness, discipline and stress related absence at all-time high levels.

11. The recent Senior Management issues are a predicted consequence of having insufficient middle and senior managers in the structure to facilitate promotional progression. The result and management crisis has been in the papers on an almost daily basis.

13. There are now almost 1000 less front line police officers since 2013 and many hundreds of closed Police Stations, the crime statistics are rising as a result. Serious and Violent Crime at an all-time high. Overall crime is reduced mainly due to public apathy and lost faith in reporting minor crime, as nothing will be done and it will take hours to get a Uniformed response.

14. The centralised Control Centres has meant that decades of local knowledge has been lost. Catastrophic failures in mobilising are being made on a weekly basis and famously the Single Services Centralised Control left 2 people to die in a car next to one of the busiest roads in Scotland.

15. There is no serving police officer (many many hundreds) I have met in the North of Scotland that have said the Single Service is working, efficient or saving money. The common comment is it will never work and should be disbanded asap. I have not met or spoken too any officer including senior officers who say the Single Service is a good thing.

16. The vastly exaggerated benefits mentioned in the 2012 Act have failed to materialise and have indeed been proven not to exist. The sale of overvalued property has failed. The centralised procurement has failed. The service to the public has failed. Nothing good has come of the 2012 Act.

17. Complete Control Failure occurred in the early hours of 10th March 2018, when 3 casualties were left trapped upside down in freezing temperatures north of Lerwick Shetland. The Fire, Police and Ambulance Service were all dispatched 20 miles south of Lerwick in the wrong direction, the resultant additional delay caused by this catastrophic mobilisation failure was over an hour.
18. The 2012 Act was opposed by almost all Principle and Senior Managers, it's now FIVE years of evidence are a clear vindication that the professional officers were correct and the consultants and politicians were unanimously wrong in creating such a poor piece of legislation. Unfortunately it is the Service Staff and Scottish Public that have been let down by the political establishment in creating such a flawed piece of Legislation as the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.

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

Answer - Absolutely not in any respect. The Government is drip feeding emergency budget money on an annual basis to prop up the failure created by the 2012 Act.

Fire and rescue service

*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

I can see no benefit as a consequence of the 2012 Act.

(b) any negative consequences of the 2012 Act for the fire and rescue service.

1. There can be no more damming statement to the failure of the 2012 Act than the present CFO stating in a public consultation document leaked to the Sunday Post last year, that the SFRS in its new and present format is Unsustainable beyond April 2018. This is just five years from its mishandled and ill-advised creation. The most senior fire officer in Scotland and his senior management team have stated in a national newspapers that the 2012 Act has failed the Scottish Public by creating an ineffective, unmanageable and unsustainable National Fire Service.

2. The Act created a national Fire Service that has failed the Scottish Public from day one. The SFRS performance statistics are an absolute disgrace and speak for themselves.

3. The SFRS have failed in every area of performance with all the good work of the previous 8 services stopping has stalling in 2013/2014 and now showing a levelling or increase in all areas of incident, injury and death. This may be caused by the huge reduction of experienced middle managers across the country as a direct consequence of the 2012 Act.

4. There are over 800 fewer front line operational staff and several fire stations have closed since 2013 and this is with a to date no publicly accountable true saving in revenue and capital.

5. The creation of the centralised controls has been a complete disaster and left the SFRS with three control centres which are not interoperable as promised and in fact all three control centres use totally different systems and outdated technology and cannot cover for each other. This situation is actually worse that the 8 original control centres which all proved in 2000 to be completely compliant and robust enough to
sustain any complete national failure of communications, that may have occurred through the Millennium.

6. The new control centres continue to make failures on a daily basis mainly due to system limitations and a complete lack of any operator local knowledge. The SFRS is completely reliant on Front Line Fire Station Personnel informing the Control Centre of errors. This has created a huge delay in mobilisation and has meant upwards of a one hour delay in life threatening events before the eventual correct resource being mobilised.

7. The SFRS has stopped recording call handling times and mobilisation times. This has meant that there is no public performance indicators accountability with regard to when the public might expect help or indeed the appropriate response to their need. This failure has been admitted by the SFRS in its failure to provide evidence on call handling times in 2 FOI requests by an MSP and also well documented by 2 requests by the Justice Committee Petition PE1511.

8. The SFRS since its creation has failed its Fire Fighters and Communities in the Islands of Scotland by failing to undertake the basic statutory health and Safety and Road Traffic Act requirements for maintenance of all Island Fire Appliances and Equipment. This failure has meant that no inspections of vehicles were carried out on Islands for over 18 months. This basic maintenance issue points to a failed structure and Governance. This failure has also been admitted by the SFRS in its failure to provide evidence on vehicles and equipment maintenance in 2 FOI requests by a different MSP and also well documented by 2 requests by the Justice Committee Petition PE1511.

9. The SFRS structure in 2013 was so defective it has had to be bolstered just two years after creation in 2015 by the addition of 6 new principle managers called Assistant Deputy Chief Officers positions. This effectively cancelled any benefit of the 2012 Act in reducing the 8 original Chief Officers to one. It must be assumed that the 2012 Act SFRS structure was incapable of providing effective management which again causes doubt on the whole validity and suitability of the 2012 Act.

10. Complete Control Failure occurred in the early hours of 10th March 2018, when 3 casualties were left trapped upside down in freezing temperatures north of Lerwick Shetland. The Fire, Police and Ambulance Service were all dispatched 20 miles south of Lerwick in the wrong direction, the resultant additional delay caused by this catastrophic mobilisation failure was over an hour.

11. The vastly exaggerated benefits mentioned in the 2012 Act have failed to materialise and have indeed been proven not to exist. The sale of overvalued property has failed. The centralised procurement has failed. The service to the public has failed. Nothing good has come of the 2012 Act.

12. There is no serving SFRS personnel (many many hundreds) I have met and talked to in the North of Scotland that have said the Single Service is working, efficient or saving money. The common comment is it will never work and should be disbanded asap. I have not met or spoken too any officer including senior officers who say privately that the Single Service is a good thing.
13. The moral of the National Fire Service is at an all-time low, with sickness, discipline and stress related absence at all-time high levels.

14. The 2012 Act created a single Fire Board which is incapable of effectively controlling, managing and governing the SFRS. The Board is made up of too few members which are volunteers and unelected. This is clearly not representative of the vastly diverse communities around Scotland. The Previous 8 services were governed by over 200 locally elected and controlled councillors. The change that the 2012 Act created has been catastrophic and has assisted in the failure of the SFRS making Scotland a far less safe place to live since 2013, statistical evidence suggests.

15. The 2012 Act was opposed by almost all Principle and Senior Managers, it's now FIVE years of evidence are a clear vindication that the professional officers were correct and the consultants and politicians were unanimously wrong in creating such a poor piece of legislation. Unfortunately it is the Service Staff and Scottish Public that have been let down by the political establishment in creating such a flawed piece of Legislation as the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.

16. The bringing together of the 8 previous Fire Services which are nationally funded meant 5 years of VAT, which will never be refunded and has wasted millions of pounds of public money.

17. The true capital and revenue cost of binging together the 8 services has not yet been publicised.

18. The Single Fire Service in Scotland is incapable of representing local needs and locally targeted policies. Its one size fits all national governance and management have meant there is no local effective input into Fire Service policy, structure or direction. The local committee meetings are incapable of impacting on local strategy, or local needs. The dogmatic requirement by the Strathclyde like management of the SFRS to force a policy of a minimum of 4 crew on all Fire Appliances has meant the closure recently of Fetlar Fire Station in Shetland, leaving the community with no fire cover. This inflexibility and one size fits all inexperienced in rural firefighting management is a major reason why one Single Service in Scotland will never work.

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

Absolutely not in any respect. The Government is drip feeding emergency budget money on an annual basis to prop up the failure created by the 2012 Act.

**Other issues**

**Are there any other issues you would like to raise in connection with the operation of the 2012 Act.**
1. It is clear the 2012 Act has failed the Scottish Public in creating single Police and Fire Service across Scotland which have failed the public and continue to fail the public on daily basis.

2. Now five years into the failure it is time for a radical independent review of how our Fire and Police Service are Structured and Governed. This review should be given an open book radical as needed remit to look at what is in the best public interest requirement of our Police and Fire Service.

3. The review team should be made up of existing and retired senior managers of both services 50/50 from before 2013 and after 2013. There should be absolutely NO political involvement and NO consultant involvement as this was clearly what led to the 2012 Act failure.

4. I believe this review team would be able to create a sustainable model for the Fire Service and Police Service that will be fit for purpose for decades to come.

5. It may be the best way forward is to create 4 or 5 regionalised Police, Fire and Ambulance Services. Single Services in 4 or 5 areas that manage and control all 3 Emergency Services as one joint Civil Defence or Public Safety Service. The benefits of joint services are immense in terms of shared facilities, both property and vehicles. A single joint Management and Governance in 4 or 5 Regionalised Areas has huge benefits as well as it allows local control and targeting of appropriate resources by people who know best and are locally accountable for their actions.

Alexander Kidd
22 May 2018