

## **Justice Committee**

### **Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012**

#### **Letter from the Convener to Chief Constable Stephen House**

Thank you for letter of 20 December 2012 in which you provide an update on progress towards agreement with the Scottish Police Authority regarding the roles and responsibilities for human resources and finance. The Justice Committee considered your letter at its meeting today, along with correspondence from the Chair of the Scottish Police Authority and a joint update on progress towards a single fire and rescue service from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) and its Board. We also had sight of an SPA meeting paper on business activities, which is due to be considered by the SPA at its meeting on 18 January 2013.

The Committee shares your concerns regarding the pace of progress in resolving this dispute, given that the new arrangements for policing are to become operational on 1 April 2013. We are also concerned about police staff who face increasing uncertainty over their future until agreement is reached. In addition, we have concerns about the proposals contained in the SPA meeting paper on business activities which would appear to suggest that human resources and finance staff are to be employed by both the SPA and Police Scotland and the potential duplication and costs arising from this proposal. We would urge that additional staff are not engaged until final agreement over responsibilities is reached.

We also note that the SFRS and its Board intend to deal with responsibilities for human resources and finance through a Scheme of Delegation, with the SFRS Board as the employer, responsible for setting the strategic direction and effective scrutiny, and the Chief Officer to manage the overall day to day financial and human resource management responsibilities. We are confused as to why similar arrangements cannot be put in place to resolve the issues of dispute in relation to policing and would therefore welcome an explanation of this.

Finally, we would urge you and Mr Emery to resolve this on-going dispute as soon as possible, and in any case by 18 January. If this is not achieved, the Committee intends to invite you both to attend a Committee meeting shortly thereafter to explain in more detail why an agreement cannot be reached. We look forward to receiving a response after 18 January meeting.

We have written on similar terms to Mr Emery and intend to publish both letters on the Committee web pages later today.

Christine Grahame MSP  
Convener, Justice Committee  
8 January 2013