



# **Response to the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Bill – Financial Memorandum**

The UNISON Scotland Submission  
To the Scottish Parliament's Finance Committee  
On their call for Written Evidence on the Police  
and Fire Reform (Scotland) Bill – Financial  
Memorandum

February 2012

## **Scottish Parliament Finance Committee Call for Evidence: Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Bill**

### **Introduction**

UNISON Scotland welcomes the opportunity to respond to the call for written evidence from the Scottish Parliament's Finance Committee regarding the above Bill.

UNISON is Scotland's largest trade union representing over 162,000 members working in the public sector in Scotland, and represents police staffs as well as Fire and Rescue control room and support staff in Scotland. UNISON Scotland welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation exercise.

### **Consultation**

1. Did you take part in either of the Scottish Government consultation exercises which preceded the Bill, and if so, did you comment on the financial assumptions made?

UNISON Scotland submitted a response to both consultation exercises and highlighted our concerns about the lack of detail on the financial assumptions.

2. Do you believe your comments on the financial assumptions have been accurately reflected in the Financial Memorandum?

Although the Financial Memorandum contains more information on the savings there is still a lack of detail, with too many assumptions made about the costs of the restructure and the projected savings.

3. Did you have sufficient time to contribute to the consultation exercise?

Yes

### **Costs and Wider Issues**

Not all of the questions within this section of the call for evidence directly affect UNISON Scotland. For this reason we will provide a more general response to the issue of costs.

It is difficult to assess whether the estimated costs and savings provided within the Financial Memorandum are either reasonable or accurate. The paper highlights a wide range of figures for both costs and savings, depending on what assumptions are made. For instance, in the case of the police reform the costs range from £137million to £163million, while the potential savings range from £1.135billion to £621million.

Similar variations are identified in the more detailed breakdowns later in the report, highlighting potential cashable and non-cashable savings, with some savings potentially coming from increased productivity but no comment on how this will actually be achieved.

Although the Financial Memorandum provides more information than the previous consultation exercises, there is still a distinct lack of detail.

UNISON Scotland is also concerned that local authorities may end up with additional budgetary pressures paying for the scrutiny of complaints, training for members, or even the administration of a local police board and local fire and rescue board – when this should come from the SPA/ Scottish Fire & Rescue Service resources rather than from local authorities own funding streams.

There is also a concern regarding the VAT liability for both new organisations, as highlighted within the report. This issue needs early clarification, if there is no VAT exemption then this will be a recurring cost on both budgets (approx £22million per annum for the police and £4million per annum for Fire and Rescue).

As the Government has set a target to maintain police officer numbers, the focus of the savings are concentrated on police staffs. This means some 2000 police staffs posts could be made redundant followed by job substitution by police officers. This is in contrast to the report by the National Police Improvement Agency in England and Wales, which examined how forces could save resources by removing the use of a warrant card for some jobs where there is no need for one, and having a better workforce mix between civilian and uniformed staff. As UNISON has previously highlighted, most Scottish police forces are already less efficient and effective in this regard than forces in England.

Police staffs includes properly qualified civilian personnel delivering a wide range of routine, complex and specialised functions that are central to modern day police forces, while allowing uniformed officers to concentrate on operational policing duties. Taking trained operational police officers off the streets to perform administrative tasks – at greater cost, is economic madness.

Contact: Dave Watson [d.watson@unison.co.uk](mailto:d.watson@unison.co.uk)



UNISON House  
14 West Campbell Street  
Glasgow  
G2 6RX

0845 355 0845