



**SCOTTISH**  
**FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Working together for a safer Scotland

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE BOARD</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>MONDAY 14 JANUARY 2013</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>DIANE VINCENT</b>

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>EMPLOYEE PARTNERSHIP FORUM</b>
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## **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To recommend a renewed constitution for the Employee Partnership Forum reflecting the establishment of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Board.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Members are invited to:
- (a) Formally approve the attached Constitution; and
  - (b) To nominate two representatives to the Employee Partnership Forum.

## **3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The Partnership Forum first met on 3 March 2012 with its '*Maintaining Good Industrial Relations during Reform*' Constitution being approved on 10 May 2012.
- 3.2 As part of their working together, the Forum agreed that the FBU, in partnership with CFOAS HR Lead, should develop proposals for the longer term employee relations' structure within the new SFRS. This work has progressed and a joint document proposing the way ahead is expected to be tabled to the Forum in February 2013.

- 3.3 In the interim, and in recognition of the SFRS and its Board becoming established, there is a need to update the Partnership constitution to reflect the required change in relationship and structure.
- 3.4 The document is attached for the Board's approval.

**DIANE VINCENT**  
**Director of People and Organisational Development**

**January 2013**

**SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

**EMPLOYEE PARTNERSHIP FORUM**

**MAINTAINING GOOD INDUSTRIAL  
RELATIONS**

**(Interim arrangement in the lead up to 1 April 2013)**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Board of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, its Management and recognised Trade Unions are committed to working together to address the challenges that lie ahead, constructively and positively.

This agreement is between the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and its recognised Trade Unions FBU, RFU, APFO, FOA, UNISON, GMB and UNITE, who collectively represent employees. The aim of the agreement is to establish a flexible and responsive employee relations environment which recognises our common interest in ensuring the future success of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

This agreement complies fully with the information and Consultation of Employees Regulations 2004 which provide employees with the right to be informed and consulted over matters affecting their employment.

All parties to this agreement concur that by partnership we mean, that we will work together to develop and support an environment of trust, respect and inclusively at all levels, in the shared belief that partnership will benefit the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and individual employees. We will do this in order to achieve successful delivery of the Service's Vision, Values and Objectives. The Board, Management and Trade Unions will consult on these strategic leads, which will define at the highest level what success looks like for the service and how we will get there.

The driver behind all the Scottish FRS activities is to provide the highest quality Fire and Rescue Service whilst establishing and maintaining the best possible conditions of employment and the Fire and Rescue Service's reputation as an employer of choice.

Partnership Working will be extended in time to operate in all areas at all levels in the organisation and will as far as possible aim to produce agreed strategies and solutions by consensus rather than adversarial collective bargaining. To this end, Trade Unions and the Strategic Leadership Team have been encouraged to jointly develop a "Working Together" framework which will demonstrate joint commitment to that objective and which will influence management and employee relations across the organisation. The parties have agreed that this agreement will therefore apply in the interim period up to 1 April 2013 and its content will be reviewed in consideration of the "Working Together" framework.

Procedures required of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service as an employer by employment legislation have been agreed and established for the new service, (e.g. Grievance, Consultation and negotiation) but the emphasis will be on developing a culture of "no surprises" and one of seeking to jointly resolve problems. Initially, Partnership Working will commence at a national level with the Board and Chief Officer meeting with senior representatives from within the recognised Hubs in the short to medium term.

It is intended that this agreement will provide a foundation for future partnership working within the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

## **BACKGROUND**

The National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services agreed a protocol for good industrial relations in the UK Fire and Rescue Service in 2007. The protocol's principles remain relevant to employee relations within the SFRS, i.e.

1. To support management and trade unions working together; and
2. To encourage management and trade unions to agree harmonised industrial relation arrangements which will apply within the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service from the earliest possible date.

This Agreement's objectives will be progressed via regular meetings between SFRS Board members, the Chief Officer, Strategic Leadership Team and senior representatives from within the recognised trade unions structure.

### **How we work together will be based on the following:**

1. We share a common goal of ensuring the future success of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.
2. We act with integrity in our relationships, openly sharing information and dealing with issues in an honest and straightforward manner whilst recognising different interests.
3. We recognise the legitimacy of expressing different views, valuing the different contributions that everyone can make and sharing responsibility for the resolution of problems.
4. We actively promote two-way communication which is vital if we are to fully understand the issues to be addressed. Information will be shared to the fullest extent possible.
5. We provide a voice for and encourage all employees to participate in determining the direction of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and developing an innovative and can-do culture.
6. We are committed to the positive contribution trade unions can make in supporting the achievement of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's future vision and related objectives and encourage employees to join an appropriate Trade Union.
7. We believe that joint problem solving should be the preferred approach to reaching decisions and resolving problems.
8. We expect the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to be a preferred employer in the way it will recruit, develop and reward employees and in the provision of a safe working environment.

## Partnership Forum Representation Arrangements

1. The Employee Partnership Forum will be established as a consultative and joint problem solving body which will concern itself with issues which relate to the whole organisation including strategic objectives and Service delivery. The authority to review the agreement rests with the Forum.
2. Matters relating to existing FRS' conditions of employment will continue to be considered within existing consultation and negotiating forums. Where possible, conditions of service applicable to the new service and which are aimed at easing the transition process will be discussed by the Chief Officer (and/or Strategic Leadership Team members) with the relevant trade unions and referred to the Board of the SFRS for approval.
3. The Board of the SFRS will be represented by the Chairperson and two other Board Members:
  - Seven seats will be allocated to the Trade Unions (FBU, RFU, FOA, GMB, UNITE, UNISON and APFO). These representatives are expected to be senior within their respective trade union's structure and able to contribute to the Forum's work with their trade union's authority. In recognition of transferring Scottish Government staff the group will invite participation of an appropriate trade union representing the transferring employees in the Group's work.
  - The Management membership will consist of the Chief Officer and the Strategic Leadership Team.
  - The forum may co-opt or authorise any person(s) with special knowledge to help it carry out its function.
4. The forum will meet on a regular basis (initially monthly) with additional meetings being arranged to address specific topics as approved by the Chair of the Board.
5. The Forum will be chaired in this interim phase by the Chair of the Board.
6. The CFOA(S) HR/Org. Development Sub Project Lead is co-opted onto the forum to fulfil the role of Secretary to the forum.
7. Agenda items will be engathered 2 weeks in advance of scheduled meetings and circulated to forum members one week in advance of meetings.
8. It may be appropriate to establish sub groups of the forum to address specific issues. The scope and membership of any sub group will be determined by the forum.

***Signed by all Parties***

**On behalf of**

**Scottish Fire and Rescue Service**

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Chair

DATE

\_\_\_\_\_

Chief Officer

DATE

**On behalf of  
Trade Unions**

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FIRE BRIGADES UNION

DATE

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RETAINED FIREFIGHTERS UNION

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UNISON

DATE

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UNITE

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GMB

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FOA

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APFO

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