



THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION SCOTLAND

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For Immediate Release
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Fire Brigades Union Welcomes Positive Scottish Parliament Debate on the Future of Fire & Rescue Services in Scotland

In a Scottish Parliament debate, which took place today (Thursday 10th September 2009) Fergus Ewing MSP, Minister for Community Safety, outlined to MSPs the main issues contained within the Draft **Fire & Rescue Framework for Scotland**, which is currently the subject of public consultation.

He used the opportunity to praise the work of Firefighters & Emergency Fire Control Operators in Scotland and made commitments to work to improve the Services for the future.

Numerous MSPs contributed to the debate and whilst many raised concerns over such matters as the rise in Fire Deaths & Firefighters fatalities, arrangements for training and funding issues, there was a clear consensus of opinion that Standards, Strategies, Policies & Procedures needed to be harmonised & agreed at a Scottish level, through appropriate Governance structures, in order to ensure proper interoperability between services, consistency of service delivery and to underpin National Resilience.

Roddy Robertson, Fire Brigades Union Executive Council Member for Scotland said *“We are delighted with the comments made by so many MSPs today. It is encouraging that not only do they value the service we provide to our communities, but are now beginning to appreciate the issues of concern that need to be addressed and are identifying positive solutions for the future.*

The Minister also referred to future funding shortfalls and intimated that Fire & Rescue Authorities needed to look at positive ways to make savings whilst ensuring that the front line was protected. This was echoed by many MSPs.

Ken Ross, Scottish Secretary of the Fire Brigades Union said *“We understand that all public services are facing severe funding difficulties in the coming years, however it is heartening that the Parliament is sending out a clear message to Fire & Rescue Authorities, to identify savings away from the front line.*

“It is absolutely vital that there are sufficient numbers of Front Line Operational Firefighters attending emergency incidents, who are properly trained & equipped to serve our communities safely & effectively.

“Firefighters & Emergency Fire Control Operators will be greatly heartened by the constructive & positive contributions made today by so many parliamentarians. It is now down to Fire & Rescue Service Partners & Stakeholders to work together to achieve the vision laid out today.

****ENDS****

Notes for Editors

- Section 40 of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 places a requirement on Scottish Ministers to produce a Fire & Rescue Framework for Scotland and to keep it under review.
- The Framework must set out the priorities & objectives for Fire & Rescue Authorities and contain guidance in connection to carrying out their functions.

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