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Mr Pat Watters CBE
Chair, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
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Your ref: SN/PW/DJH

13 June 2017

Dear Pat,

Thank you for your letter of 26 May 2017 following up on our meeting of 16 May to discuss transformation of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS).

As I said when we met, the Scottish Government very much values the excellent work of the SFRS and the part that it plays in keeping the people of Scotland safe. We recognise the need to adapt the service to meet the new challenges that now exist and we fully support your vision for transformation of the SFRS to meet those challenges. In particular, we understand the need for re-design of the firefighter role and flexibility in the delivery of services for the future.

You acknowledge in your letter that the SFRS are facing significant financial pressures, a situation shared with other public services in Scotland. These pressures cannot be underestimated and they are not short-term, which is why I have stressed the importance of the SFRS planning for transformation within the financial envelope available to you.

I am not suggesting that the challenge is an easy one – far from it – but we need to see options for change that provide for delivery of a modernised service within the resources available. You mention in your letter that you will share your detailed financial and operational planning with us and set how you would plan to maintain service delivery were you to implement to an alternative timeframe and keep within the financial envelope. I look forward to seeing the detail very soon. We will of

course provide all the help we can and I know that our officials are already in contact on a range of issues including the further development of your modelling work.

In summary, I think that we do have a shared ambition for the future of the SFRS and we are fully committed to achieving a successful outcome. Financial pressures do exist, however, and we need to ensure that the SFRS can transform and operate within available resources. I am confident that by working together we will be able to generate imaginative solutions that will enable us to complete the work on reform successfully. I look forward to continuing and constructive discussions.

With best wishes,
Annabelle
ANNABELLE EWING