

Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs

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Dear Stakeholders

The Scottish Government does not support the way in which UK Government has brought forward and imposed changes to the firefighter pension schemes. But now Westminster has passed legislation to close the current schemes on 1 April 2015, it is vital that we act now to ensure a new pension scheme is in place by then for those firefighters who are affected.

I began partnership negotiations to design a reformed Firefighter Pension Scheme for 2015+ in March 2012 and I am grateful for the constructive way in which your representatives have approached these lengthy discussions. In the detailed scheme attached to this letter, I have set out two areas where we have been able to deliver an improvement on the initial proposal - full protection for those within ten years of retiring on a full pension, and enhanced early retirement options from age 55 for all members of the new scheme. Through our partnership negotiations we have reached the best possible solution for Scottish firefighters, within the limitations of the current devolved settlement. Should further progress on other aspects be made in negotiations at a UK level, we will of course ensure that Scottish firefighters also receive the benefit of any national-level changes.

I would like to thank all stakeholders for their participation in the negotiations and confirm that I wish to continue our engagement in future meetings to discuss the details of the pension scheme design as we work up the detailed regulations necessary to bring the new scheme into being.

ROSEANNA CUNNINGHAM