



Home Office

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All Fire and Rescue Authority Chairs in England

All Police and Crime Commissioners in England

31 August 2017

Nick Hurd MP

Minister of State for Policing

and the Fire Service

POLICING AND CRIME ACT 2017: POLICE AND FIRE COLLABORATION

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 introduced a range of measures to enable closer collaboration between the emergency services. This includes amending the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to provide the option for police and crime commissioners (PCCs) to take responsibility for fire and rescue services where a local case is made. In doing so, they must set out how the transfer is in the interests of the statutory tests of economy, efficiency and effectiveness, or public safety. Only where it appears to the Home Secretary that these statutory tests have been met, and that in the case of a proposal based on the interests of economy, efficiency and effectiveness the transfer will not have an adverse impact on public safety, will it be approved. This provides an opportunity to drive innovative reform across both services and bring the same direct accountability to fire as exists for policing.

I am encouraged by the progress that has already been made by PCCs to develop local business cases. I am aware that a number of you have recently, or will shortly, finish local consultations, and several others are actively considering the opportunities available in legislation. I expect the pace and ambition of this work to continue and look forward to seeing the final business case submissions and the benefits a change in governance will bring to our local communities.

I am equally aware that in the majority of circumstances, this good progress has been underpinned by good examples of joint working between PCCs and fire and rescue authorities (FRAs). I appreciate that the business case process can be more complex in certain areas, in particular where the FRA is part of a county council. It will, of course, be important that county councils and PCCs engage closely with one another to include an assessment of the financial impact of the transfer in the proposal so it can be assessed

against the statutory tests. This will include any transition costs for a PCC style FRA and residual costs for a county council and how this financial impact will be managed. However, it is my view that these challenges are not insurmountable and should not prevent local leaders seeking to develop a business case for a transfer of governance. My officials will continue to engage local areas and provide support on this process, where appropriate.

Where relevant local authorities do not agree with the PCC's proposal, the Act provides for an independent assessment process which the Home Secretary must have regard to when making her decision whether to approve the business case. Further information on this process was circulated by officials on 18 August.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nick Hurd". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

NICK HURD MP