



Councillor John Riddle
Northumberland County Fire Rescue Authority

12 February 2018

Dear Councillor Riddle,

I am writing further to correspondence I have received from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria, raising concerns in regards to the PCC's request to join, as a voting member, the Northumberland Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA).

As you are aware, the Policing and Crime Act 2017 Act (2017 Act) introduced provisions to enable greater collaboration between police, fire and rescue, and emergency ambulance services. These provisions present a real opportunity for emergency services to maximise available resources, enhance local resilience and improve the service delivered to the public.

In particular, the 2017 Act enables a PCC to take on governance of local fire and rescue services, where a case is made, demonstrating that such a move would be in the interests of economy, efficiency and effectiveness, or in the interests of public safety. PCCs have clear local accountability and a strong mandate to transform and improve emergency services for their communities.

Alongside this, the 2017 Act enables PCCs to be represented on the FRA with voting rights, where the FRA agrees. The intention is to enable PCCs to take part in discussions and decisions in a meaningful and effective way whilst fostering closer relations between police and fire. If such a request is made to the fire and rescue authority, the authority must consider the request; give reasons for its decision to agree to or refuse the request, and publish those reasons in such manner as it thinks appropriate.

The 2017 Act sets out the broad framework for requests to join the FRA, and so there is some local flexibility in how the FRA consider a request. However, I wish to make clear that I believe it to be unreasonable for this to take up to a year and to involve the submission of a business case, as has been reported to me.

I hope that you will consider the PCC's request in as timely manner as possible to enable you both to work towards driving greater collaboration for the benefit of your local

communities. The Government wants to see greater pace and ambition in emergency services collaboration, and we are committed to supporting PCCs in making this happen.

I am copying this letter to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nick Hurd". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'N'.

Rt Hon Nick Hurd MP