

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING: 18th JANUARY 2016

Item 10

**SUBJECT: TRANSFER OF FIRE AND RESCUE POLICY TO THE HOME OFFICE
REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Authority of the Government's transfer of police responsibility for Fire and Rescue from the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) to the Home Office.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The 2015 Conservative manifesto contained an intention to *"enable fire and rescue and police services to work more closely together and develop the role of our elected and accountable Police and Crime Commissioners"*.
- 2.2 On 11th September 2015, Government issued a consultation document setting out proposals for legislative measures to enable the enactment of the manifesto commitment by enabling Police and Crime Commissioners to take on the governance of local Fire and Rescue Services where a local case is made. TWFRA responded to this consultation. Government has not yet published its response to the consultation.
- 2.3 In the November 2015 Spending Review, Government announced its intention to *"bring forward legislation to enable PCCs to take on responsibility for fire and rescue services, subject to a clear business case and local support, with local fire services providing the necessary information for PCCs to develop the business case"*.

3. JANUARY 2016 ANNOUNCEMENT

- 3.1 On 5th January 2016, Government issued a written statement and letter to all Chief Fire Officers and Chairs of Fire Authorities from the Home Secretary (attached as Appendix A), to the effect that responsibility for Fire and Rescue policy would transfer from CLG to the Home Office with immediate effect. The change is confirmed in Fire and Rescue Bulletin 23, 6th January 2016.

- 3.2 Mike Penning, Minister of State at the Home Office and Minister of State at the Ministry of Justice, currently responsible for Policing, Criminal Justice and victims, will also take on responsibility for Fire and Rescue.
- 3.3 As of 1st April 2016, staff working on the national fire policy function will transfer to the Home Office. This includes the Fire Policy Division, National Resilience and Fire Programmes Division, the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor's team and staff working on firefighter pensions.
- 3.4 Melanie Dawes, the CLG Permanent Secretary, will remain Accounting Officer for fire budgets until 1st April 2016 when this function will pass Mark Sedwill, Permanent Secretary at the Home Office.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This report has no direct financial implications. This change is likely to have implications for the funding mechanism for Fire and Rescue services in future years.

5. HR IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report has no direct HR implications.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This report has no direct legal implications.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Since the national policy framework is a key driver of the Authority's strategic planning and risk management, this change may impact upon risk management in the future. The Corporate Risk Management Group will consider the risk and opportunities of this decision as more details emerge.

8. EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 This report has no direct implications in terms of equality and fairness.

9. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 This report has no direct health and safety implications.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to note this decision by Government and receive further reports in future.

