



Cllr Alistair Bradley
Chair
Lancashire Police and Crime Panel

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Dear Alistair,

Fire Service Governance

I am writing to you about the governance structure which oversees how Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service is delivered. At the moment the Combined Fire Authority covers our area but powers under the Policing and Crime Act allow for changes to this set up, including provisions for Police and Crime Commissioner's to take on responsibility for the service.

As you will know, all public services have had to find significant savings in the past eight years while adapting to meet the challenges posed by the changing demands placed upon them. The police and fire services have been no different in this regard. This has created a situation where services have had to adapt to meet the demands placed upon them in an efficient way, in order to protect the overall levels of frontline services.

I have therefore asked for an Options Report to review how we can further police and fire collaboration in Lancashire and whether the existing structure is the best way forward. The early suggestion, both here and from other parts of the country, is that a change of governance is needed to deliver the most effective collaboration and therefore the best and most efficient service.

Let me be clear, this is not about greater cuts because further savings will have to be found by both organisations regardless. This is about maximising the efficiency of both services so there are the resources available to reinvest in frontline services to protect the public.

From the start, I have been clear that what matters is what best protects and improves the performance of both the fire and police services in Lancashire. I am aware that the public, and Panel Members, will want to see any efficiencies or improvements reinvested.

Since the advent of Police and Crime Commissioners, replacing the old Police Authority structure, I have delivered 18% savings on the operating budget of my office compared with the costs of the Lancashire Authority. At the same time I am now responsible for the provision of victim services. I am also directly accountable to the public for the decisions I make, which are scrutinised by members of the Panel to ensure proper checks and balances. These are especially important around council tax precept, budgets and the policing priorities for the county.



In 2016, MPs in the Public Accounts Committee found that "fire and rescue authorities have done well to absorb funding reductions since 2010" but also that there were "weaknesses in the local scrutiny by fire authorities which raise concerns about their operational performance and safeguarding value for money".

For those in favour of keeping the status quo, the clear challenge will be to demonstrate the benefits of the current model and how it will rise to the challenges of changing demands while protecting services with ongoing savings still to find.

No plans have yet been brought forward, and the Options Report is still being finalised, but I wanted to let you know at this early stage that I will be considering this in early May. Following the production of the report I would then be looking at whether to proceed with a local business case for any of these options in Lancashire.

I would not be looking to make a decision without clear indications of the benefits of a given approach or understanding the implications. I would also then be looking to consult with the public, key stakeholders, including Panel members, and those who deliver these services themselves before reaching any final decisions.

Once the options report is completed I will share a copy of this with you and rest of the Panel. In the meantime I will keep you updated with any further developments. Please share this update with other members and if you or any members of the Panel have any questions about this process please feel free to contact me or my office.

Yours sincerely

Clive Grunshaw
Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire