

MOTION TO FULL COUNCIL RE: Fire and Rescue Services

This Council recalls its resolution of 9 July 2013 that:

'Cornwall Council notes the proposal by the Home Secretary to consider the transfer of control over fire and rescue services from local authorities to police and crime commissioners and the welcome given to this proposal by the Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner.

Cornwall Council believes that local control and accountability of fire and rescue services is vital to ensure that the service best meets the diverse needs of rural communities such as Cornwall. The needs of a small and specialised service risk being lost in a large two county organization with a single elected representative in charge.

Cornwall Council believes that any transfer of control to the Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner would inevitably lead to merger with other services, control moving to Exeter and the loss of jobs in Cornwall.

Cornwall Council therefore resolves to write to the Home Secretary, Local MPs, the Fire Brigade Unions and the Police and Crime Commissioner expressing our concerns in principle at the proposals.'

The Council regrets the re-emergence of the Home Secretary's proposals, which appear completely to ignore the views of this Council. It questions the validity, when applied to Cornwall, of the argument that transferring Fire and Rescue Services to Police and Crime Commissioners would result in back office function economies. This Council believes that, by Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service being co-terminus with and answerable to a unitary authority, such back office savings have already been achieved and there has already been good collaboration with other 'blue light' services with Cornwall leading the way by piloting a tri-service station in Hayle.

The Council reiterates its strong view that Cornwall's Fire and Rescue Services are unlikely to benefit in any way from being accountable to a Police and Crime Commissioner based outside of Cornwall. It further suggests that the Home Secretary's proposals are inconsistent with the Government's professed interest in localism, and calls upon Cornwall's Members of Parliament and House of Lords to ensure that these ill-considered ideas are not acted upon in the case of Cornwall.

The Council asks the Leader to bring this resolution to the attention of Cornwall's Members of Parliament, Cornwall based Peers, the Home Secretary, the Police and Crime Commissioner and others likely to be able to influence such decisions.