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Cllr Rebecca Knox
Chair
Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Five Rivers Community Health & Wellbeing Centre
Hulse Road
Salisbury
Wiltshire SP1 3NR

19 May 2020

Dear Rebecca

REQUEST TO JOIN DORSET & WILTSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

As Police and Crime Commissioners, we are acutely aware of the pressures on the wider public sector, and the inherent efficiency, resilience and improved service delivery that increased collaboration can bring.

Indeed, the current position of extraordinary change, necessitating very strong and close partnership working through our respective local civil contingency structures demonstrates how effective and efficient public services can be if they work together.

As professional links between the delivery capabilities of our respective organisations strengthen, it is right that we also reflect this in our governance.

This is a view shared by Government, indeed the Policing and Fire Minister writes in the foreword to 'Enabling Police and Crime Commissioners to sit and vote on Combined Fire and Rescue Authorities' :

"This consultation was about ensuring that Combined FRAs can appoint a PCC with voting rights, and that the same level of transparency applies to Combined FRAs as it does to County or Metropolitan FRAs..."

"This sets a clear expectation for opportunities for closer working and cooperation to be implemented and encourage collaboration in areas where a PCC does not take on responsibility for local fire and rescue services. I expect each affected FRA to now carefully consider a

relevant PCC's membership request should it be made. While the decision to grant membership rests with the FRA – and to be clear, neither the Government nor these amendments mandate the granting of membership - I see no substantive barriers to FRAs not agreeing to appoint a PCC as a member.”

For the record, whilst neither of us recognises that the model of PCC-led governance would be more effective here, we do recognise that there is considerable experience that we could bring to bear that would be of use to both DWFRA and DWFRS, particularly in relation to engaging with Home Office and HMICFRS, as needed.

We also note that considerations over the relative size of the FRA should no longer be a determining factor, given that DWFRA has completed its governance review, and membership of the authority reduced with Home Office approval from 30 to 18 members.

We finally note this is not the first time such a request has been made. The direction from Government is clear, and therefore we would expect that – should that be your decision – the reasons for refusing this request would be publicly scrutinised.

We thank you, and your Members, for your time in considering our request, and look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely



Martyn Underhill
Police & Crime Commissioner for Dorset



Angus Macpherson
Police & Crime Commissioner for
Wiltshire and Swindon