

Alun Davies AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a
Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public
Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref MA P ARD 2636 18

Cllr Meirick Lloyd Davies
Chair, North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority
Ffordd Salesbury
St Asaph
Denbighshire
LL17 0JJ

20 August 2018

Dear Meirick,

When we met at the end of April, we discussed my proposals to reform FRA governance and finance. I agreed to arrange some in-depth discussions, facilitated by two leading academics in the field, to establish if there could be any common ground between us.

You and the other Chairs have now met Professors Farrell and Ashworth, and you should also have seen their report. Pressure on our diaries has, unfortunately, prevented us from meeting before the summer break, as I had hoped. However, it appears from the report that there is some scope to make further progress.

In particular, there appears to be some support for a model which would enhance accountability and financial transparency at a local level. Professors Farrell and Ashworth's report suggests that such a model might have the following features:

- FRA membership linked in some way to that of local authority cabinets, with all that entails for scrutiny and for integration with other services.
- FRA funding derived from a council tax precept, in a similar way to that for policing (and for fire services in England).
- Greater and more focused support and development opportunities for FRA members, whether from the WLGA or otherwise.
- Co-option into FRA membership of individuals with particular relevant expertise, such as in health and social care.

Overall, this proposal is not greatly different from one we developed last year, following the publication of the local government Green Paper. I am certainly not going to dismiss it out of hand: as I have already said to you, I am attracted to creating proper and accountable local control of fire and rescue services.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

However, there may be problems of detail. For instance, the size of council cabinets is currently capped by law, appointments to them are in the gift of leaders, and members of them cannot receive any extra salary for serving on an FRA. I am also not yet convinced that this model would best equip the Service to take on a wider role in a properly accountable and sustainably funded way.

Any such problems could, though, be addressed, if you can be flexible on the details. It could then be developed into a proposal on which we could formally consult – although I would reserve the right to consult on other proposals too. If you are willing, no doubt our officials can hold discussions over the summer.

I am writing in identical terms to Tudor Davies and Rowland Rees-Evans, and copying this letter to CFO Simon Smith and to Steve Thomas at the WLGA.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alun Davies', with a flourish underneath.

Alun Davies AC/AM

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