

Brandon Lewis
Parliamentary under Secretary of State
Department of Communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

16 January 2014

Dear Brandon

Thank you for your response to my letter of 22 November. Your recognition of the importance of closer working across Whitehall is welcomed and we look forward to seeing the impact of this at the local level.

The Fire Services Management Committee's position on council tax referendums follows the LGA's overall position which is that the referendum cap should be removed. We await the Secretary of State's announcement on the 2014/15 principles with great interest and hope that they can represent a greater level of flexibility for all local authorities.

As you will know, a number of fire and rescue authorities are now considering merger. The issue of the equalisation of council tax precepts will be part of these discussions and we will need to wait to see whether it represents a significant barrier. Government's support and advice to fire and rescue authorities throughout these discussions and negotiations will be valued.

Like Government, fire and rescue authorities want to secure the long-term affordability and sustainability of the firefighters' pension scheme. Past and future representations to Government by the Fire Services Management Committee on the reforms to the pension scheme are made with this principle in mind.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Kay Hammond
Chairman, Fire Services Management Committee