

## **APPENDIX A**

### **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 15<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2016 QUESTIONS TO THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE AUTHORITY**

#### **Question to the Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire Authority from Councillor Jason Zadrozny**

Would the Chairman of the Fire Authority take this opportunity to outline for members of the County Council the implications as he sees them of the potential takeover of the Fire Authority by the Police and Crime Commissioner?

What is the soonest time frame legislation would allow this to happen should the PCC make a formal request?

#### **Response from Councillor Darrell Pulk, Chairman of the Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire Authority**

In answering the question I will allude to the governance structure of the Fire Authority which will help explain and give clarity to Members regarding the difference between that and the Police.

The combined Fire and Rescue Authority has statutory responsibilities for both the strategic and operational elements of all fire and rescue functions. The fire service is governed in all aspects by the members of the Authority. This is not the same within the police force, where the Chief Constable is recognised in statute as having accountability for the operational delivery of police powers; a totally different situation.

To ensure the Authority fully discharges its widening range of responsibilities, it has governance arrangements that consist of 18 elected members, 12 from this Council and 6 from the City Council. As well as the four meetings per year of the Full Authority there is a committee structure in place that ensures that all members are fully engaged in the development of policy and the scrutiny of all functions. These meetings are also held in public and the minutes are published on the City Council website.

The governance structure works well to provide a highly performing and motivated service that has effectively delivered £11 million of savings over the past six years, whilst at the same time managed risk and maintained high levels of public confidence. The Police and Crime Bill, which is the legislation that would enable Police and Crime Commissioners to become the Fire and Rescue Authority is still working its way through Parliament. I believe, it went through the House of Lords, either yesterday or today. The Bill has not yet been passed.

Until such time as the Bill receives Royal Assent, it is not possible to say, with any degree of certainty when this might happen, but current indications are that it is likely to be towards the end of this year or early 2017.

To enable the Police and Crime Commissioner to become the Fire and Rescue Authority the draft Bill currently provides that they would have to submit a proposal, effectively a business case, to the Home Secretary for an Order approving the changes.

As constituent authorities it is the City Council and County Council and not the Fire Authority which would be formally consulted on any proposal. However, if the Bill goes through in its current format, which I believe it will, the Fire Authority must provide information and assist the Police and Crime Commissioner to enable the development of any proposals. There is no information currently available as to how long the approval of any proposals may take.

The Bill also provides for the Police and Crime Commissioner to formally request to join an existing Fire Authority as a voting member and it will be for the Fire Authority to either support or refuse any such request, publicly explaining their decision and the rationale for it.

The Police and Crime Bill also requires that police, fire and ambulance services must collaborate to improve efficiency and effectiveness. Members will be aware that a lot of work in this area already takes place, the fire service responding to medical emergencies, joint training and the sharing of premises are just a few examples.

At this early stage I am not convinced that the evidence is compelling to support the transfer of the fire and rescue governance to the Police and Crime Commissioner. As this is a fast moving issue, officers of the Fire Authority and I, following on from a meeting of all members of the Fire Authority a couple of weeks ago, are working hard to ensure that members from the constituent authorities are kept informed through the use of both formal and informal communication channels.