



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Via email

Lawrence Conway,
Chief Executive,
South Lakeland District Council

Sam Plum,
Chief Executive,
Barrow in Furness Borough Council

24 December 2020

Dear Chief Executive,

Thank you for the letter of 23 December which you, together with the Chief Executive of Lancaster City Council, sent in response to my letter of 21 December 2020.

First, you appear to have misunderstood my letter. My essential point was that “when exercising his powers under Part 1 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the 2007 Act) to give effect to structural or boundary change, the Secretary of State must ensure that no unitary county council area or district council area is divided between two or more police areas”. This is wholly different from saying a proposal for unitarisation cannot be made which includes a proposed unitary council whose area would fall across two or more of the existing police areas. It is clear that such a proposal can be made. The provisions in section 13(4) of the 2007 Act make clear that where such a proposal has been made certain actions must be undertaken by the Secretary of State if he wishes to implement the proposal.

The purpose of my 21 December letter was to draw to your attention that you may have misunderstood these provisions and accordingly, we suggested that you may wish to seek further advice in the light of which you might wish to update your proposal, providing an assessment of its impact on the local police forces, including the views of the Police and Crime Commissioners. We similarly referred to the fire and rescue service.

Secondly, as to your request for an extension of the time in which you may submit any update to your proposal, having regard to all the circumstances we are prepared to agree a deadline of close on Thursday 14 January.

Paul Rowsell CBE
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Finally, as to your request in your 9 December letter for us to convene a meeting with Home Office officials and the relevant PCCs and ourselves “as part of our ongoing commitment to developing the proposal collaboratively”, such a meeting would not be appropriate at this stage where locally led proposals have been submitted for the Secretary of State to consider and decide whether or not any proposal, subject to consultation and Parliamentary approval, should be implemented. The Leaders of your councils, and the Leader of Lancaster City Council, met the Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government on 14 December to make oral representations about their proposal and any other matters they considered relevant.

I am copying this letter to Kieran Keane, the Chief Executive of Lancaster City Council.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. Rowsell". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

P ROWSELL

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