



**Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government**

Sir Peter Brown  
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**Brandon Lewis MP**  
*Parliamentary Under Secretary of State*

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7 November 2013

Dear Sir Peter,

**Pay Policy Statement 2013-14**

Thank you for your letter of 4 November, in response to mine of 21 October regarding the re-engagement of Chief Fire Officer Graham Stagg. Since then it has come to light that Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Neil Newberry, was also offered similar arrangements.

I am pleased that you have asked your Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review your pay policy procedures as a matter of urgency. I still have outstanding concerns which I hope that they will be able to address. These include:

- The reasons why there was not a stand alone version of your pay policy statement available for the public to scrutinise;
- That your policy on re-engagement has not been included in the pay policy, and while it can be found if one knows where to look, it still appears to be in draft;
- That your re-engagement policy requires that anyone who is to be re-engaged, must be intending to retire within three months of the application for re-engagement, with a normal retirement pension (which is clearly not the case in the above two cases), and why that policy was not followed;
- That the re-engagement of these two senior officers was determined under delegated authority, and not by the full council;
- That the re-engagement appeared to be based solely on the Government's changes to pension regulations;
- That there was no consideration of whether this was now the right time for Mr Stagg or Mr Newberry to retire and the opportunities presented by refreshing the senior management team, or taking the opportunity to share these posts with other services; and
- How the 'bonuses' are determined which enabled the Chief Fire Officer's pay to climb to £168,702 last year.

Finally, you highlight that you are a 'lean and efficient' Authority. Sir Ken Knight in his report 'Facing the Future' noted that your authority was the one English fire and rescue authority that had not submitted data to CIPFA for 2011-2012 which enables such comparisons to be made.

I look forward to seeing the results of the Committee's review, and very much hope that it will help restore public confidence in the Authority's processes, and provide lessons that others might learn.

As with my letter of 21 October, I am placing a copy of this letter in the public domain.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brandon Lewis', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**BRANDON LEWIS MP**