



Bob Neill MP

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Dear Colleague,

Today I have published the Government Response to the Fire Futures reports presented to me by the fire and rescue sector in December 2010.

From the start of the Fire Futures Review I was clear that I wanted it to be conducted with the sector in the lead. The review, for the first time, provided the sector with a real opportunity to identify ideas on the future of the Fire and Rescue Service and present those ideas directly to me.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed to and supported the Review. Much time and effort was afforded to the process and this is indeed reflected in the array of ideas that were presented to me.

I would also like to thank those who wrote to me and my Officials. Your comments on the reports were very helpful in deciding how to proceed going forward.

My aim for the response to the review was to reflect how we intend to take forward with the sector the public service reform agenda in the context of fire and rescue services at local level and in terms of national resilience. Within our response the key principles are:

- Restoring a focus on local communities instead of national targets;
- Ensuring local decision making on local services;
- Letting the Service and the wider sector – not Whitehall - manage its cross sector functions collaboratively;
- Providing clarity on national and local roles in resilience and ensuring the right structure is there to support it.

As you would expect, in line with the Government's priorities on localism and decentralisation the majority of the ideas in the Fire Futures reports fall to the sector to progress dependent on local needs and priorities.

I have every confidence that you will rise to the challenge, drawing on ideas in the “ideas bank” to help you to deliver the reforms alongside value for money and reduction in public spending.

The Government will now focus on providing the right framework for national resilience and to enable local Fire and Rescue Authorities and the wider sector to deliver the reform agenda, increasing accountability to local communities for the delivery of their services. We will use the local government resource review and development of the next National Framework for the Fire and Rescue Service as a context for further work to create the right structure to enable you to deliver.

The Government response to Fire Futures can be found at:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/firefuturesresponse>

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Neill', with a large, stylized initial 'B' and a long, sweeping tail.

BOB NEILL MP
Minister for the Fire and Rescue Service