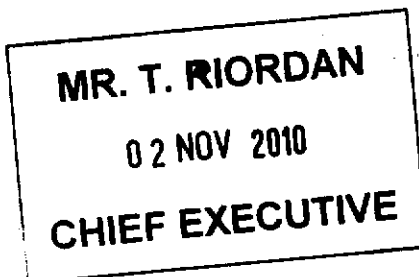




Home Office

Rt Hon Nick Herbert MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR POLICING AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE
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www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Tom Riordan
Chief Executive
Leeds City Council
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31 October 2010

Dear Mr Riordan

RESOLUTION OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

Thank you for your letter of 22 September informing the Home Secretary of the resolution of Leeds City Council to oppose any plans to scrap police authorities. I am replying as the Minister responsible for Policing and Criminal Justice.

I was disappointed to read about Leeds City Council's resolution, and must respectfully disagree that the Government's proposals to introduce directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners might adversely affect the Government's ambition for greater local accountability in policing.

I am familiar with the argument that large force areas – such as West Yorkshire – will be too large for one individual to be effectively accountable for all police activity within it. To provide a comparison, I would draw the Council's attention to the Mayor of London, who represents an electorate of seven million people and is responsible for a far broader remit of services than just policing. This model has proved effective precisely because the public appreciate knowing who is responsible for services in their area, and being able to hold that individual to account for the quality of those services. The present system, by comparison, does not provide any level of direct democratic accountability for delivering a quality service.

I do agree that elected members have an important role to play in policing governance, and I am clear that the best elements of the old system should be retained. As outlined in Chapter 2 of our consultation document, *Policing in the 21st Century: Reconnecting Police and the People*, Police and Crime

Panels will include local elected representatives and independent members. The role of the panel will be to publicly scrutinise the decisions of the Police and Crime Commissioner on behalf of the public – this is one of several measures that will be in place to ensure that there are effective systems of checks over the power of the Commissioner. The important role of local elected representatives will not, therefore, be lost.

Thank you and your colleagues for bringing these concerns to my attention. I hope that the points I have raised will persuade the Council to reverse their resolution on the abolition of police authorities, and support the Government's plans to replace bureaucratic accountability with democratic accountability.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Herbert', with a stylized, cursive script.

NICK HERBERT