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KW/PW

26 January 2015

Helen Bamford
Department for Communities and Local Government
North East Zone
Floor 2
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Dear Ms Bamford

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON PROPOSAL TO AMEND LEGISLATION RELATING TO COMBINED AUTHORITIES AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY BOARDS

We refer to the letter from Paul Rowsell of 19th December 2014 seeking comments on proposals to amend legislation relating to Combined Authorities and Economic Prosperity Boards.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposals. In general the proposals are to be welcomed in that they give greater flexibility to Councils in terms of arrangements for delivery of relevant functions. In relation to the questions posed the Council's observations are as follows:

- 1. Do you agree that the proposal to enable Local Authorities that do not have contiguous boundaries to form Combined Authorities and Economic Prosperity Boards will reduce the burden to collaboration? Why?**

Yes. The proposals will provide greater flexibility in the formation of Combined Authorities and in this regard the proposed safeguards are also important as referred to at Question 2.

Joint Managing Director
Gill Rowe LL.B (Hons) Solicitor : Managing Director (People and Places)

2. Do you agree that the proposed safeguards are necessary and sufficient? Why?

The proposed safeguards are to be welcomed. In particular the new condition F with the intended safeguard c, "The Secretary of State must have regard to the likely effect of the creation of the Combined Authority or Economic Prosperity Board on surrounding areas", is helpful. This is because an unintended consequence of the changes could be that some District authorities within a County Council area are left out of Combined Authority arrangements. In this regard it is important that the definition of "the Councils concerned" includes those who neighbour on a proposed Combined Authority or would be otherwise affected by it.

It would also assist if an authority (District or County Council) could be a full member of more than one Combined Authority. (This is particularly important in respect of any proposal that does not include all authorities within a County Council or LEP area).

3. Do you agree that the proposal to enable a County Council to delegate its function to a Combined Authority for part of the County Council's area will reduce a burden to collaboration? Why?

Yes. This proposal will enable greater flexibility which is to be welcomed in the context of the above comments. It follows that it would also assist if the County Council were able to delegate its functions to more than one Combined Authority. This would allow for the situation where one or more of the Districts in a County Council area wished to be part of one Combined Authority, and other Districts part of another Combined Authority.

4. Do you agree that the proposal to remove the review and scheme requirements for changes to Combined Authorities' or Economic Prosperity Boards' constitution, functions or funding will reduce a burden to collaboration?

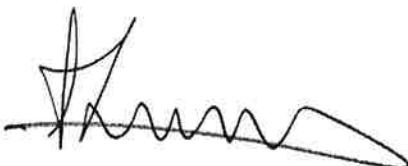
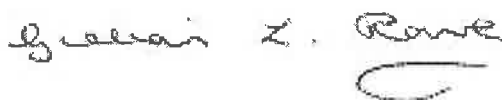
This change is welcomed and appears to strike the right balance in respect of reducing burdens and requiring safeguards and protections.

5. Do you agree that the three proposed changes meet the pre-conditions for use of a Legislative Reform Order as set out above.....

This is a matter for Government and is technical in nature.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to comment and we trust these observations are of assistance.

Yours sincerely

**KIM WEBBER AND GILL ROWE
JOINT MANAGING DIRECTORS**