



Department for
Transport

From Mike Penning MP, Parliamentary
Under Secretary of State

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Dear Mr Powell

Thank you for your letter of 9 November containing the petition that the Petitions Committee of the National Assembly for Wales is considering, regarding the modernisation of Her Majesty's Coastguard.

The petition makes references to proposals that were part of the first consultation that ran from the 16 December 2010 to 5 May 2011. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) published a suite of risk documents for these proposals and these are available on the MCA's website at:

www.dft.gov.uk/mca/mcga07-home/shipsandcargoes/consultations/mcga-consultationsarchive/hm_coastguard_proposals_for_modernisation_consultation_2010/consultation-risk.htm

On 14 July we issued revised proposals for consultation. I announced on 22 November that we will now go ahead with the arrangements that were set out in these proposals. The second consultation closed on 6 October and an independent review team, with the engagement of the PCS Union, reviewed the anonymised responses. That review showed that no new compelling operational or other arguments were submitted.

I can assure you that moving to the new nationally-networked system will mean that any incident can be handled by Coastguards located at the Maritime Operations Centre (MOC) and at any of the other coastguard centres. The waters in areas around Wales will be covered in the same way as any area around the UK coast.

We also announced on 22 November that the new MOC will be housed in a currently vacant, state of the art control centre at Kites Croft in Fareham (Hampshire). The building's existing facilities, purpose built for a Civil Contingencies Act, Category 1 Emergency Response control room function, means that the MOC can be established quickly, allowing for an extensive programme of tests and trials to prove and refine the new concept of operations for maritime rescue coordination. The choice of Fareham also makes best use of the Government's existing estate and minimises upfront costs, offering best value for money.

The coastguard centre in Dover will act as the back-up to the MOC, and the smaller centre at London will continue unchanged. There will also be coastguard centres at Aberdeen, Falmouth, Milford Haven, Holyhead, Belfast, Stornoway, Humber and on Shetland. The MOC and all coastguard centres, including Holyhead and Milford Haven, will be operating 24 hours a day.

In addition, the MCA will maintain a strong community coastguard presence around the Welsh coast with its volunteer Coastguard Rescue Teams and new Coastal Operational Hubs; in Wales these will be in Swansea and Cardigan Bay.

With Regards

MP

MIKE PENNING