



Home Office

Lord Greenhalgh
Minister of State for Building Safety,
Fire and Communities at
Ministry of Housing, Communities &
Local Government and Home Office

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts
Chair SLSC
BY EMAIL ONLY

2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
www.gov.uk/home-office

26th May 2020

Dear Lord Hodgson

I am writing with regard to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (Fire and Rescue Functions) (Amendment) Order 2020 which was debated on the floor of the House on 5 May 2020. I am sorry to report that because of a failure in the final step to authorise this Order it has not been brought into effect as was intended. I want to apologise to you for this significant failure.

As you are aware, the SI received cross-party support and was agreed by those peers participating in the debate. It had already been approved following a debate in the House of Commons earlier the same day. After our debate the SI should have been made, ready to come into force on its published commencement date of 9 May 2020.

Unfortunately, due to human error in the Home Office, the final stage of the process, obtaining the Ministerial signature required to “make” the SI, was not undertaken. This failure to complete the process is a matter of great concern to me and to the department and I would like to apologise unreservedly. Internal communication between policy, legal and parliamentary teams was reduced as a result of remote working. This meant that the usual steps were not taken to ensure the finalised SI was produced for Ministerial signature. I have met the Permanent Secretary and officials to agree process changes that will provide a further layer of assurance and ensure that training and guidance is clarified to ensure that this cannot happen again. Unfortunately, this error only came to light last week. The draft SI that was considered by both Houses provides that the SI was to come into force on 9 May 2020. This poses very significant challenges in signing the SI now.

Having considered appropriate legal advice, regrettably, we believe that to ensure the Order’s legal validity it will need to be re-laid and reconsidered by both Houses. A laying date of 2 June 2020 is proposed, and I would be grateful if you could re-consider this SI at your earliest convenience. I am sorry that we are having to

debate this Order again, and apologise for the impact this will have on an already tight Parliamentary timetable.

I will arrange for a copy of this letter to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Greenhalgh', written in a cursive style.

Lord Greenhalgh
Minister of State for Building Safety, Fire and Communities at
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