



SIMON HOARE MP
NORTH DORSET

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON, SW1A 0AA

Cllr Clare Weight
Chair, Fire Authority
c/o BCP Civic Centre
Bourne Avenue
Bournemouth
BH2 6DY

8 April 2026

Dear Clare,

Re: consultation on fire station closures

I hope you are well. I wanted to raise two issues with you and look forward to your response on both. I am copying this letter to the three Councillors from Dorset Council area who are members of your Authority.

1. From my engagement with Senior Officers of the Fire & Rescue Service and from what I heard at the recent Cranborne consultation event, your Authority's instruction to the senior officers was to identify how to make savings which had the lowest risk attached to them. Can you confirm? The consultation makes clear that the proposed closure of eight stations does increase risk to the public but this is deemed to be within the parameters of acceptability. I very much doubt that the public's response to the consultation will be one of welcome. To that end, can you advise what other options for cost saving were presented to your Authority before deciding to proceed with the proposed closure of stations? The consultation is based on a 'we need to save money, the closure of eight stations saves money, this is what we want to do'. Surely a meaningful consultation exercise would have had options for the public and stakeholders to consider? I asked at Cranborne what Plan B is. I do not think I had a meaningful answer. So, could you let me know what your Authority's plan is if the overwhelming public response is to reject the proposed closures?

2. As I understand it the Officers of the Fire & Rescue Service are undertaking the consultation and you and your fellow Authority members will vote on the outcome at the end of the consultation. You and other Authority members have been on the 'top table' at public consultation events acting as advocates for the proposals out to consultation. I am concerned that this has blurred the lines of accountability making the Authority both Judge and Prosecuting Counsel. How can the public have confidence of an impartial adjudication of the consultation outcomes and public's response when members of the Authority have been promoting the proposals. Can you advise what advice was sought or given as to the appropriateness of members of your Authority presenting at consultation events? Is the Authority now open to the charge of predetermination and compromised, therefore failing the Wednesbury Test of reasonableness?

My North Dorset constituents are very concerned about the robustness of the Fire & Rescue Service given we are a sparsely populated rural area. I look forward to your response on both issues raised above.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Hoare
Member of Parliament for North Dorset

Cc. Cllr Laura Beddow, Cllr Byron Quayle, Cllr Sowry-House

Working Hard for North Dorset

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