

Public consultation continues into proposed fire station closures

The ongoing public consultation into the potential closure of eight fire stations by Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service will run until Friday 15 May.

The eight locations under consultation are all on-call fire stations: Bradford on Avon, Charmouth, Cranborne, Hamworthy, Maiden Newton, Mere, Ramsbury and Wilton.

Chief Fire Officer Andy Cole said: "Nobody wants to close fire stations but, despite saving over £15 million in the last ten years, our financial position remains very challenging due to a 19.5% cut in funding provided directly from Government. We still need to make sure our operational staff have the equipment and training they need to stay safe, and we've pared back our Corporate staff numbers as much as possible. This isn't Plan A, we've worked through many difficult options before this point."

He added: "The elected Members of Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority are responsible for keeping the Service sustainable, and they recognise that tough decisions need to be considered.

"This consultation is therefore essential. We understand that people care about what this means for their community. That is why we want them to tell us what they think, and if there's anything important that we might have missed. No decisions have been made. The final decision will be made by the Fire & Rescue Authority at their meeting on 30 June. We would urge our residents to have their say via our survey or the upcoming online meetings."

In-person meetings have been held already in six of the eight locations, with further dates booked for Charmouth and Maiden Newton in April. There will also be an online meeting for each location during April.

Full details of these, FAQs, station-specific data, the consultation leaflet and the survey can be found at www.dwfire.org.uk/proposed-station-closures

A paper copy of the survey can be requested by calling 01722 691000 during office hours, or by emailing consultation@dwfire.org.uk