

Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

12 March 2026

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing following Dr Andrew Murrison's question at Prime Minister's Questions about the serious financial pressures facing Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service (DWFRS).

As he highlighted, grant reductions and over-optimistic Treasury assumptions on council tax base growth mean eight fire stations and 96 retained firefighters across Wiltshire and Dorset are now proposed for closure. He asked whether you would facilitate an urgent ministerial meeting with Wiltshire and Dorset MPs to discuss precept flexibility—at no cost to the Treasury—to protect frontline services.

DWFRS's consultation identifies eight on-call stations at risk, including four in Wiltshire: Bradford on Avon, Mere, Ramsbury and Wilton. Communities, councillors, MPs and representative bodies are deeply concerned that these closures will weaken response capability and compromise public safety. The Fire & Rescue Services Association has warned that removing rural stations will "put lives, properties and the environment at greater risk," stressing the essential role of retained firefighters.

DWFRS has been clear that these proposals stem from a structural deficit created by funding reductions, rising costs and lower council tax flexibility. In light of Dr Murrison's question, I urge the Government to:

- Convene the requested urgent ministerial meeting with Wiltshire and Dorset MPs
- Review precept flexibility for DWFRS
- Support a sustainable long-term funding settlement for rural fire and rescue services

These steps would help prevent the loss of essential stations and 96 retained firefighters and reassure the public that rural communities will remain properly protected. I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr Richard Clewer
Leader, Wiltshire Council Conservatives