



ROBERT WALTER MP

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR NORTH DORSET

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

Cllr Rebecca Knox
Chairman of Dorset Fire Authority
Service Headquarters
Peverell Avenue West
Poundbury
Dorchester
Dorset DT1 3SU

20 October 2014

Dear Cllr Knox,

Strengthening our Fire and Rescue Service: A Consultation by Dorset Fire Authority

I write to you in reference to the above public consultation on the future of Dorset Fire and Rescue Service (DFRS), on which you have sought my comments

As you may be aware, due to prior commitments I am sadly unable to attend the MP briefing meeting at Westminster on 28 October. However, I have had numerous conversations with Chief Fire Officer Darran Gunter about the financial challenges that DFRS continues to face and I am acutely aware of the need to respond innovatively to these.

On the basis of these conversations, the responses provided at the MP briefing on 17 March attended by Fire Minister Brandon Lewis MP, and the draft business case for consultation "*A new combined fire authority for Dorset and Wiltshire*", I am content to offer my support to Scenario 3 as the option most likely to secure and sustain the high level of service currently delivered by DFRS in the long term.

With the assurance that DFRS would fully retain its local identity and connection to the local communities it serves, and that Dorset residents would remain properly represented in any reformed governance structure, I would welcome the greater resilience, buying power and overall financial security that a single Combined Dorset, Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority has the potential to offer to my constituents and the people of Dorset.

Kind regards,