



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE  
FIRE AND RESCUE**

2026

Item 26/07 Appendix 6

## Station Review – Mere Fire Station

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# Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service

MEETING	Members Working Group
DATE OF MEETING	23 July 2025
SUBJECT OF REPORT	Mere Fire Station - Station Review
STATUS OF REPORT	For publication
PURPOSE OF REPORT	For decision
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p><b>General</b></p> <p>As Members have requested, eight stations have been chosen to be included within their value for money review programme. These reviews are important as they are a potential means of addressing two main strategic risks facing the Authority, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to secure financial sustainability that ensures and maintains effective service provision (Strategic risk 6)</li> </ul> <p>Note: Currently the predicted revenue budget shortfall for financial year 2026-27 is £1.38m rising to £1.76m in 2028/29.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to have a robust and financially sustainable on-call duty system to meet the needs of the Service (Strategic risk 9)</li> </ul> <p>Dependent upon the decisions made by the Authority, the savings may be used to address the financial deficit facing the Authority or to offer an opportunity for alternative reinvestment to further improve frontline delivery, aligned to current and future risk and demand.</p> <p>The methodology, data sets and process undertaken in producing this paper, followed the approach approved by Members at the Member's Working Group, on the 5 March 2025.</p> <p><b>This station review</b></p> <p>This paper, and the supporting documents, provide Members with a review of Mere Fire Station.</p> <p>This station has one fire appliance and a co-responding car, that will soon be removed following the South West Ambulance Service Trust's decision to withdraw from using fire and rescue services.</p> <p>The station currently has seven on-call firefighters who provide 59.78% availability and typically respond to a low number of incidents (67 average per year).</p>

	<p>The annual revenue cost of the station is currently £181k with capital investment requirements in property and vehicle replacement of around £31k per year. The review has identified that the station has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low incident numbers.</li> <li>• Low historic and current station availability.</li> <li>• Significant recruitment and retention issues.</li> <li>• Low level community risks on its station ground.</li> </ul> <p>On the basis that Mere Fire Station was available 100% of the time (which is a modelled response and not reflecting its current 59.78% availability), if it were to be closed there may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An increase in response time of 1 minute 51 seconds to property fires with a sleeping risk.</li> <li>• An increase in response time of 2 minutes 37 seconds to property fires with no sleeping risk.</li> <li>• An increase in response time of 3 minutes 6 seconds to road traffic collisions.</li> </ul> <p>This report evidences that the closure of this station would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have low knock-on operational impacts to surrounding stations.</li> <li>• Present an annual revenue saving of £181k.</li> <li>• Provide a reduction in capital investment requirement across the property and vehicle replacement of around £31k per year.</li> <li>• Present an opportunity for a one-off capital receipt for the sale of the station and site.</li> <li>• Provide an opportunity for savings or more effective and efficient use of resources in areas of greater community need.</li> </ul> <p>As the Authority's professional advisor, the advice of the Chief Fire Officer is that this station should be the subject of public consultation and considered for closure by the Authority.</p>
RISK ASSESSMENT	<p>The Service has two strategic risks that this review seeks to mitigate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to secure financial sustainability that ensures and maintains effective service provision (Strategic risk 6)</li> <li>• Failure to have a robust and financially sustainable on-call duty system to meet the needs of the Service (Strategic risk 9)</li> </ul> <p>Failure to deliver changes that improve efficiency, effectiveness and productivity could undermine the reputation of the Service, with potential interest from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire &amp; Rescue Services and wider stakeholders.</p>

COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	<p>A comprehensive Stage 2 Impact Assessment has been undertaken, which includes community impact.</p> <p>This has identified a negative impact on communities with an increase in response times based on a modelled 100% station availability.</p>										
PEOPLE IMPACT ASSESSMENT	<p>A comprehensive Stage 2 People Impact Assessment has been undertaken for all affected staff.</p> <p>This has identified negative impacts with the loss of posts due to a probable lack of redeployment opportunities. It is estimated that the total redundancy costs are £37,796.</p>										
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	A Stage 1 Impact Assessment has been completed.										
BUDGET IMPLICATIONS	<p>Station reviews present the Fire Authority with the opportunity to potentially reduce capital costs and ongoing revenue budget expenditure from key stations, to either investing in the critical risk and demand areas of the Service or provide an overall saving to support the financial deficit.</p> <p>A full review of Mere Fire Station costs has been identified in the Financial Data section of Appendix A. The potential removal of this station will have the following financial impacts:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Amount (£)</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Estimated annual capital budget savings</td><td>£31,239</td></tr> <tr> <td>Estimated annual revenue budget savings</td><td>£180,670</td></tr> <tr> <td>Estimated One-off redundancy costs</td><td>£37,796</td></tr> <tr> <td>Latest Station Valuation*</td><td>£630,000</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>* Asset valuation used within the Annual Statement of Accounts. A full valuation for sale will be undertaken should Members recommend consideration for closure to the Authority.</p>	Amount (£)		Estimated annual capital budget savings	£31,239	Estimated annual revenue budget savings	£180,670	Estimated One-off redundancy costs	£37,796	Latest Station Valuation*	£630,000
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Estimated One-off redundancy costs	£37,796										
Latest Station Valuation*	£630,000										
PROFFESIONAL ADVICE	<p>As the Authority's professional advisor, the advice of the Chief Fire Officer is that this station should be the subject of public consultation and considered for closure by the Authority.</p> <p>Members are asked to consider and approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mere Fire Station to be included in the public consultation programme and considered for potential closure by the Authority.</li> </ul>										
BACKGROUND PAPERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Safety Plan 2024-28</li> <li>Fire Cover Review 2023</li> <li>Medium Term Financial Plan 2025-29</li> <li>MWG Decision Report – Station Closures Feb 25</li> </ul>										

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MWG Fire Station Review Report Template</li> <li>• MWG Stage 2 People Impact Assessment Template</li> <li>• MWG Station Review Methodology Paper</li> <li>• Over the Border Review</li> <li>• Resourcing and Savings Programme 2024-26 Framework</li> <li>• Station Review Mandate</li> <li>• Strategic Assessment of Risk 2023-25 and 2025-28</li> </ul>
APPENDICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appendix A – Station Review – Mere Fire Station</li> </ul>
REPORT ORIGINATOR	<p>Name: Cllr Kevin Small, Members Working Group Chair.</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:democratic.services@dwfire.org.uk">democratic.services@dwfire.org.uk</a></p>

## 1. Background

- 1.1. The fire and rescue authorities are legally required under the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services (England) 2018 to produce a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). This requirement is met by the Authority through the production and approval of the Community Safety Plan (CSP).
- 1.2. Within the CSP 2021-2024, the Service made a commitment to develop and deliver a full and comprehensive Fire Cover Review (FCR) for the Service. As Members are aware this was undertaken in 2023.
- 1.3. The FCR supported the delivery of the CSP 2024-2028 and its associated commitments. Through this a number of changes to duty systems and fire appliance numbers have been so far delivered yielding improvement to fire cover, a better use of public money and savings of around £900k. The decisions associated with these changes has been undertaken by the Chief Fire Officer through delegated arrangements.
- 1.4. The Authority however indicated that potential fire station closures should remain a decision for the Authority and subsequently established a Members Working Group.
- 1.5. The inaugural Members Working Group (MWG) took place in November 2024. Through this initial meeting Members tasked Officers to deliver a review to identify the stations for review, using an agreed methodology and approach.
- 1.6. At their subsequent meeting on the 5 March 2025 Members approved eight stations for review, using the following agreed criteria:
  - **Corporate response impact:** The overall percentage contribution to all Service mobilisations assuming the appliance was available 100.00% of the time.
  - **Travel time to next station:** The travel time to the next nearest Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service station.
  - **Proximity to a whole time duty station.**
  - **Non-removal of two neighbouring stations.**
- 1.7. During this meeting Members also approved the methodology, appendices documentation and report templates required to support a decision for each station reviewed. This report and associated appendices are fully aligned to this direction.

## 2. Mere Fire Station

### 2.1. About Mere Fire Station

- 2.2. Mere Fire Station has one fire appliance and a co-responding car, that will soon be removed following the South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SWAST) decision to withdraw from using fire and rescue services as a means of delivering their corresponding service.
- 2.3. The station currently has seven on-call firefighters who provide 59.78% availability and typically respond to a low number of incidents (66.8 average per year).

2.4. Appendix A - Station Review of Mere Fire Station, provides a full assessment of Mere Fire Station's performance and existing response arrangements, against the modelled performance of the proposed response arrangements.

## 2.5. Financial analysis

2.6. Table 1, below, provides the annual revenue costs incurred at the station in the period April 2020 to March 2025. This includes the cost of drill nights and operational activity, premises costs including standard maintenance and cleaning, laundry and equipment costs.

Annual revenue costs incurred	
Year	Revenue Costs
2020/21	£172,108
2021/22	£145,285
2022/23	£181,897
2023/24	£207,055
2024/25	£159,628

**Table 1: Analysis of the annual revenue costs incurred at Mere Fire Station in the period April 2020 to March 2025**

2.7. Table 2 provides a breakdown of capital cyclical maintenance costs incurred since April 2016 (each station has a full cyclical review every seven years).

Cyclical maintenance costs	
Type and Period	Cost
Cyclical maintenance	£81,225

**Table 2: Cyclical maintenance costs incurred at Mere Fire Station since April 2016**

2.8. Table 3 provides a breakdown of the estimated annual cost avoidance that would be achieved indirectly across various support service departments should the station be closed by the Authority.

Annual cost avoidance if closed	
Department	Cost
Fleet maintenance cost	£4,744
ICT – licencing, connectivity, printing	£15,940
Treasury – financing cost avoidance	£33,983
Uniform	£4,107
ICT – hardware	£2,876

**Table 3: Annual cost avoidance across support service departments should Mere Fire Station be closed**

2.9. If following public consultation, the Authority decided to close the station, the indicative annual savings, shown in Table 4 may be realised. It should be noted that some of the annual revenue budget savings will not be immediate due existing

contracts for the provision of services and equipment but will be achieved once contract periods end and equipment is returned.

Estimated annual savings and cost avoidance	
Type	Cost
Revenue	£180,670
Capital Expenditure	£31,239

**Table 4: Estimated annual revenue budget savings and capital expenditure cost avoidance at Mere Fire Station**

2.10. It is estimated that 98.80% of the stations operational activity will transfer to a neighbouring on-call station, so these costs will not cease and have been excluded from the estimated savings.

2.11. Table 5 provides an estimate of expected redundancy costs based on current station personnel.

Estimated redundancy costs	
	Cost
Estimated redundancy costs	£37,796

**Table 5: Estimate of expected redundancy costs based on current station personnel at Mere Fire Station**

## 2.12. Asset ownership and covenants

2.13. The station land is owned by the Authority with no covenants in place. At the end of each financial year the Service must value each station for inclusion in the annual Statement of Accounts. This amount has been included for reference only. Table 6 provides a breakdown of the last full station valuation, which was completed in March 2021.

Latest station valuation	
Building Valuation	Land Valuation
£390,000	£240,000

**Table 6: Breakdown of the latest full station valuation for Mere Fire Station**

2.14. The actual value which could be achieved via site disposal is likely to vary from this, and a full independent valuation of likely capital receipts will be established if a capital receipt is to be sought.

## 2.15. Crewing and operational resources

2.16. Current establishment for the station is seven staff consisting of: one Watch Manager, two Crew Managers and four Firefighters.

2.17. Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025 the availability of the pumping appliance was 59.78%. This equates to 100.43 hours of availability per week.

2.18. Current contracted hours are 664.07 (55.34%) from a maximum Full Cover establishment (FCE). For reference a one pump station can utilise ten FCE or 1,200hrs per week.

#### 2.19. Recruitment and retention profile

2.20. Between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2025 there were five starters and four leavers. As of 1 April 2025, the average length of service of on-call staff at Mere Fire Station was 13 years and 1 months.

2.21. According to the Census 2021, approximately 47.76% of the Mere population were aged 15-years or under or aged 65-years and over. Therefore, only a small number of the population has been identified as eligible for recruitment to Mere Fire Station. Should the station remain open this may impact future recruitment to maintain availability of the station's appliance.

#### 2.22. Operational vehicles

2.23. The station has the following vehicles (Table 7):

Resource
Standard pumping appliance
Co-responder Vehicle

Table 7: Existing operational resources at Mere Fire Station

2.24. The station currently has a Co-Responder vehicle however that is soon to be removed following SWAST's decision to remove co-responding from fire and rescue services.

#### 2.25. Response performance

2.26. In line with the agreed methodology, the review has been modelled based on the assumption that all pumping appliances within the Service are 100% available. This removes any bias from historical appliance availability, giving the true demand and impact for each station. Data on the actual number of mobilisations for each station, and actual appliance availability, are also included to ensure a full picture is considered.

2.27. Using modelling software, an overview of response performance, is provided against building fires with sleeping risks, other buildings and road traffic collisions for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2024.

2.28. **At a Service wide level**, the data shows that the Service would achieve 8,635 (81.60%) of the corporate targets for **first appliance** response standard, before the closure of Mere Fire Station. If Mere Fire Station were to be closed 8,590 (81.10%) of the first appliance response standards would have been met. This would be a reduction of 45 incidents that met the Service response standard over the five-year period.

2.29. The data shows that the Service would achieve 4,703 (82.70%) of the **second appliance** response standards (thirteen-minutes for sleeping risk and fifteen-

minutes for other fires) before the closure of Mere Fire Station. If Mere Fire Station were to be closed 4,678 (82.20%) of the second appliance response standards would have been met. This would be a reduction of 25 incidents that met the Service response standard over the five-year period.

2.30. For modelled responses to the 67,561 incidents that occurred across the Service between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2024, the current average first response time is 9 minutes 6 seconds. If Mere Fire Station were to be closed, the modelled average first response time for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2024 would have been 9 minutes 8 seconds. This would be an increase of 0 minutes and 2 seconds.

2.31. For modelled responses to the 67,561 incidents that occurred across the Service between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2024, 12,127 required two or more appliances on the initial response plan. The average second appliance response time to these incidents is 12 minutes 25 seconds. If Mere Fire Station were to be closed, the modelled average second response time to these incidents for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2024 would have been 12 minutes 28 seconds, with an increase of 0 minutes and 3 seconds on the average second appliance response time Service wide.

#### **2.32. Impact on response**

2.33. This section reviews the change in pumping appliance mobilisations for the surrounding fire stations, based on Appendix A during the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2024.

2.34. The analysis only looks at the impacts on first and second pumping appliances and does not account for mobilisations for a third pumping appliance, or more, attending make-ups or standby moves, due to the complexity of modelling and increase in time to model all statistics that sit outside of statutory governance requirements.

2.35. Impacts on stations for additional mobilisations have been considered within this report, calculating the difference between mobilisations modelled on Mere Fire Station being available and mobilisations modelled on the closure of the station.

## 2.36. Summary of Response Impacts:

<b>Incidents located where Mere Fire Station would support the initial response N.B. this assumes 100% availability across the Service</b>			
<b>Incident Category</b>	<b>First Attendance</b>	<b>Second Attendance</b>	<b>Total</b>
Property Fire with Sleeping Risk	11	18	<b>29</b>
Property Fire without Sleeping Risk	8	6	<b>14</b>
Other Fire	74	53	<b>127</b>
Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA)	65	38	<b>103</b>
Road Traffic Collision (RTC)	62	32	<b>94</b>
Non-Statutory with Life Risk	28	36	<b>64</b>
Non-Statutory without Life Risk	71	79	<b>150</b>
<b>All Incidents</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>581</b>

**Table 8: Number of incidents located where Mere Fire Station would support the initial response as either the first or second pumping appliance during the five-year period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2024 (assuming 100% appliance availability across the Service)**

	Property Fire with Sleeping Risk		Property Fire without Sleeping Risk		Road Traffic Collision (RTC)	
<b>Modelled Response inc. Mere Fire Station</b>	<b>First Attendance</b>	<b>Second Attendance</b>	<b>First Attendance</b>	<b>Second Attendance</b>	<b>First Attendance</b>	<b>Second Attendance</b>
Average Response Time (minutes:seconds)	11:30	17:52	12:37	18:27	14:01	18:00
Response Standard Achieved (incidents)	14 of 29 (48.28%)	0 of 29 (0.00%)	7 of 14 (50.00%)	1 of 14 (7.14%)	53 of 94 (56.38%)	Not Applicable
<b>Modelled Response exc. Mere Fire Station</b>	<b>First Attendance</b>	<b>Second Attendance</b>	<b>First Attendance</b>	<b>Second Attendance</b>	<b>First Attendance</b>	<b>Second Attendance</b>
Average Response Time (minutes:seconds)	13:21	21:44	15:14	23:44	17:07	21:56
Response Standard Achieved (incidents)	9 of 29 (31.03%)	0 of 29 (0.00%)	3 of 14 (21.43%)	0 of 14 (0.00%)	17 of 94 (18.09%)	Not Applicable
<b>Impact on Modelled Response Capability</b>	<b>First Attendance</b>	<b>Second Attendance</b>	<b>First Attendance</b>	<b>Second Attendance</b>	<b>First Attendance</b>	<b>Second Attendance</b>
Average Response Time (minutes:seconds)	+ 1:51	+ 3:52	+ 2:37	+5:17	+ 3:06	+ 3:56
Response Standard Achieved (incidents)	- 5	No Change	- 4	- 1	- 36	Not Applicable

**Table 9: Modelled response capability for incidents located where Mere Fire Station would support the initial response plan during the five-year period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2024- Statutory Response (assuming 100% appliance availability across the Service)**

	Accidental Dwelling Fires		Fire Related Injuries	
	First Attendance	Second Attendance	First Attendance	Second Attendance
<b>Modelled Response inc. Mere Fire Station</b>				
Average Response Time (minutes:seconds)	11:37	17:57	13:21	18:01
Response Standard Achieved (incidents)	13 of 29 (44.83%)	0 of 29 (0.00%)	0 of 2 (0.00%)	0 of 2 (0.00%)
<b>Modelled Response exc. Mere Fire Station</b>				
Average Response Time (minutes:seconds)	13:28	21:48	15:11	19:21
Response Standard Achieved (incidents)	8 of 29 (27.59%)	0 of 29 (0.00%)	0 of 2 (0.00%)	0 of 2 (0.00%)
<b>Impact on Modelled Response Capability</b>				
Average Response Time (minutes:seconds)	+ 1:51	+ 3:51	+ 1:50	+ 1:20
Response Standard Achieved (incidents)	- 5	No Change	No Change	No Change

**Table 10: Modelled response capability for incidents located where Mere Fire Station would support the initial response plan during the five-year period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2024 – Statutory but recorded in other areas such as property fire with sleeping risk (assuming 100% appliance availability across the Service). There were no fire related fatalities during the review period where Mere Fire Station would have provided either the first or second closest response.**

### **3. Impacts of closure**

- 3.1. If Mere Fire Station were to be available 100% of the time, the closure of the station would require responses from surrounding stations to the 29 property fires with sleeping risk incidents over five years. This equates to approximately six incidents of this type a year. This would increase the modelled first in attendance time by 1 minute 51 seconds and the second attendance time by 3 minutes 52 seconds.
- 3.2. It should be noted that in reality the Service has, and continues to struggle, to recruit and retain on-call firefighters at this station and it is therefore only available around 60% of the time. Mere were available and mobilised to nine of these incidents over this five year period.
- 3.3. Mere Fire Stations appliance availability has slightly improved in the last year, if over the previous five years availability had been the same as this year it could have been available for 17 of the 29 incidents. Highlighting that whilst availability has improved, it is not during the time where incidents are occurring, providing limited improvements for the Service
- 3.4. If the station were to be closed it would require responses from the surrounding stations to 14 property fires without sleeping risk incidents over five years (2.8 per year). This would increase the modelled first in attendance time by 2 minutes 37 seconds and the second attendance time by 5 minutes 17 seconds. It should be noted however that Mere Fire Station was only available and mobilised to ten of these incidents due to its actual availability.
- 3.5. As with property fires with sleeping risk, if the appliance availability had been the same as the past year over the previous five years, the appliance could have been available for eight of the 14 incidents.
- 3.6. The closure of the station would require responses from surrounding stations to the 94 road traffic collision incidents over five years(18.8 per year). This would increase the modelled first in attendance time by 3 minutes 6 seconds. There is no response standard for second appliances at road traffic collisions. Based on the appliance availability over the last year the appliance could have been available for 56 of the 94 incidents.
- 3.7. There were 45 modelled incidents over the five year period falling within these categories where the first appliance attendance would not meet the response standard, should the station be closed. There is also one modelled incident where the second appliance attendance would not meet the response standard should the station be closed.
- 3.8. Closure of Mere Fire Station would require responses from surrounding stations to the 29 accidental dwelling fire incidents over five years(5.8 per year). This would increase the modelled first in attendance time by 1 minute 51 seconds and the second attendance time by 3 minutes 51 seconds. Mere Fire Station were only available and mobilised to nine of these incidents.

#### 4. Impact on neighbouring fire stations (DWFRS stations only)

Summary of response impacts on neighbouring fire stations			
Fire Station	Current modelled number of response	Modelled number of responses with Mere Fire Station closed	Impact (Over 5 years)
Gillingham Fire Station	448	448	No change
Shaftesbury Fire Station	37	559	+522
Salisbury Fire Station	0	4	+4
Tisbury Fire Station	68	68	No change
Amesbury Station	0	6	+6
Warminster Station	28	77	+49

Table 11: Modelled responses of impacted DWFRS Fire Stations to support or provide resilience to the initial response plan to incidents during the five-year period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2024, located where Mere Fire Station would provide the first or second nearest response, with and without availability of Mere Fire Station's pumping appliance

##### 4.1. Should it be decided by Members to close Mere Fire Station, over the modelled five-year period:

- Shaftesbury Fire Station will see the highest increase of incidents with 522 (104.4 per year/2 per week) modelled responses, acting as the nearest or second nearest response to support or provide resilience. Shaftesbury's Fire Station's two appliances were available for 99.99% and 85.77% respectively for the period between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.
- Warminster Fire Station would see an increase of 49 (9.8 per year) modelled responses to support or provide resilience. Warminster Fire Station's two appliances were available for 92.70% and 26.54% respectively for the period between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.
- Amesbury Fire Station would see an increase of six (1.2 per year) modelled responses to support or provide resilience and Salisbury Fire Station will see an increase of four incidents (0.8 per year).

#### 5. Operational resilience

- 5.1. This section considers the existing on-call section at the nearest stations and the availability percentages of the nearest ten pumping appliances to Mere Fire Station. The response time consists of the appropriate turn out time added to the travel time from station to station, based on the travel time matrix used within the Service.

Nearest pumping appliances to Mere Fire Station				
Appliance	Fire station	Crewing model	Response time	Availability
P1	Gillingham	On-Call	13 minutes	96.88%
P1	Shaftesbury	On-Call	23 minutes	99.99%
P4	Shaftesbury	On-Call	23 minutes	85.77%
P1	Warminster	On-Call	27 minutes	92.70%
P2	Warminster	On-Call	27 minutes	26.54%
P1	Tisbury	On-Call	31 minutes	58.90%
P1	Westbury	On-Call	31 minutes	52.21%
P1	Sherborne	On-Call	32 minutes	99.66%
P4	Sherborne	On-Call	32 minutes	44.22%
P1	Amesbury	Day Duty	32 / 35 minutes	84.65%

**Table 12: Nearest ten pumping appliances within DWFRS to Mere Fire Station by response time to fire station (response time incorporates turn-out time plus travel time) with on-call appliance availability for period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.**

Nearest pumping appliances to Mere Fire Station from neighbouring fire and rescue services				
Appliance	Fire station	Fire and rescue service	Crewing model	Response time
P1	Wincanton	Devon & Somerset	On-Call	17 minutes
P1	Castle Cary	Devon & Somerset	On-Call	26 minutes
P1	Frome	Devon & Somerset	On-Call	26 minutes

**Table 13: Nearest pumping appliances from neighbouring fire and rescue services to Mere Fire Station by response time to fire station (response time incorporates turn-in time plus travel time)**

- 5.2. Travel distances from the Service's closest stations to Mere Fire Station for the first three appliances mean that attendance times range from 13 minutes to 23 minutes. Although attendance times will vary depending upon the incident location as the times detailed in Table 12 are for station to station and include the appropriate turnout time.
- 5.3. Whilst over the border resources can be utilised (Table 13), the Service cannot rely upon these arrangements within our CRMP. Therefore, these resources are for indicative purposes only.
- 5.4. It is worth noting that the appliance availability at the key surrounding stations, over the review period, was generally high. Should this reduce however then resilience in the area may provide future challenges.

## **6. Current and emerging operational risk**

- 6.1. The review has highlighted that, whilst there are small pockets of development identified, there are no significant future developments proposed within the immediate area for the next three years, at the time of this review.

- 6.2. Table 14, below, provides a RAG summary of the future developments for Mere Fire Station area.

Summary of known future developments for Mere Fire Station area		
Type of development	Community impact	Risk to service
Critical Infrastructure	N/A	N/A
Non-Critical Infrastructure	N/A	N/A
Housing Developments	+ 1 minute 51 seconds	Minor
Commercial Developments	+ 2 minutes 37 seconds	Minor

Table 14: Summary of known future developments for Mere Fire Station area

- 6.3. The modelled increase in response times for the first appliance in attendance has highlighted increases in the attendance times for both property fires with and without sleeping risks. These increases are considered, from a professional advice perspective, to be tolerable with no impact on response targets.
- 6.4. Two existing operational risks have been identified within the Mere Fire Station area risk profile that qualify as a level 3 or higher risk site (which is defined as a medium, high or very high level of risk determined by the Services' Provision of Risk Information System). The highest level of risk identified is a medium risk and is considered tolerable from a professional perspective. (see section: Current and emerging operational risk (pg. 64) in Appendix A).
- 6.5. **Response capability to risk sites**
- 6.6. The closure of the Mere Fire Station would mean that a primary response to the incidents at the risk sites, highlighted in Table 15, would transfer to a neighbouring station.
- 6.7. As the majority of neighbouring stations are all on-call, familiarisation times for these sites will need to be planned as part of quarterly training schedules. This will be a minimal impact on workloads for these stations, within the capacity of those stations.

Response capability to risk sites			
Risk Category	Number of sites	Current sites reached in response standard	Change in number of sites reached in response standard
High Rise	0	0	N/A
Care Homes	5	4	-4
Hospitals	0	0	N/A
Wildfires	0	0	N/A
Heritage	26	4	-4
Thatch	37	5	-5
COMAH and MACR	0	0	N/A
Flooding	12	8	-4
High Risk Safe & Well	116	69	-69

Table 15: Modelled response capability for risk sites located where Mere Fire Station would provide the nearest response. COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards) and MACR (Major Accident Control Regulations).

- 6.8. Response times to these risk sites are likely to increase, should an incident occur. However, Table 15 shows at present that response standards would not be met on most occasions.
- 6.9. The data suggests the highest risk area in terms of site numbers is that of High Risk Safe & Well properties, which at present the station can only reach 69 within the response time. Thatch and Heritage buildings also show relatively high numbers in comparison to other risks. Should the station be closed, these will be an area of continued focus for our prevention teams and their activities.
- 6.10. As at present, should an incident occur in any of these risks, resources will be drawn from across the Service and our partners, as incidents for these risks are inherently resource intensive.

## 7. Cross Border Mobilisations

- 7.1. Cross border mobilisations are where appliances from one fire and rescue service are mobilised into another fire and rescue service area.
- 7.2. Table 16 provides the number of cross border mobilisations over the past five years.

Number of cross border mobilisations		
Fire and rescue service	Number of neighbouring service mobilisations into Mere Fire Station area	Number of Mere Fire Station Mobilisations to neighbouring FRS
Devon & Somerset	109	66

Table 16: Number of cross border mobilisations between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2024

- 7.3. Across the five-year period cross border resources were mobilised from Mere Fire Station Area into Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (DSFRS) an average of 13.2 times per year. DSFRS were mobilised to an average of 21.8 calls a year into Mere Fire Station area.
- 7.4. The closure of Mere Fire station has the potential to increase the likelihood of neighbouring services being required to respond into the Mere Fire Station area, depending on the location of the incident. However, based on the number of mobilisations during the review period, the future number of mobilisations is likely to remain low.

## 8. Special appliances

- 8.1. Mere Fire Station provided the following Special Appliance over the review period.

Mobilisations of Mere Fire Station's special appliance	
Vehicle	Mobilisations
Co-responder Vehicle	49

Table 17: Mobilisations of Mere Fire Station's special appliances during the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2024

## 9. Area profile summary and impact assessments summary

- 9.1. The Stage 2 Impact Assessments were undertaken to provide an overview of the current make-up of the staff at Mere Fire Station, along with the demographic of the communities that are served by the station.
- 9.2. The key finding from this Impact Assessment identifies that 33.86% of residents in Mere are aged 65 or over, which is higher than Wiltshire at 21.85% and well above the national level of 18.41%.
- 9.3. This indicates that should Mere Fire Station be approved for closure; the Service will continue to deliver prevention activities prioritising Mere's over 65 population.
- 9.4. As highlighted earlier within the report, Impact Assessments have highlighted that, according to the Census 2021, approximately 47.76% of the Mere population were aged 15-years or under or aged 65-years and over. Therefore, only a small number of the population has been identified as eligible for recruitment to Mere Fire Station. Should the station remain open this may impact future recruitment to maintain availability of the Mere Fire Station appliance.

## 10. Station impact, realisation and cost analysis

10.1. Table 18 provides an overview of the impact and benefit if the decision was to close Mere Fire Station.

Project analysis for Mere Fire Station	
Project impact	Project realisation
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Average response time increase of 1 minute 51 seconds for first appliance to property fire with sleeping risk.</li> <li>2. Average response time increase of 2 minutes 37 seconds for first appliance to property fire without sleeping risk.</li> <li>3. Average response time increase of 3 minutes 6 seconds for first appliance to road traffic collision (RTC).</li> <li>4. 45 (9.0 per year) first appliance mobilisations may not meet Service response standards.</li> <li>5. 1 (0.2 per year) second appliance mobilisations may not meet Service response standards.</li> <li>6. Overall, 81 (16.2 per year) mobilisations may impact first in attendance appliance mobilisations.</li> <li>7. Overall, 56 (11.2 per year) mobilisations may impact second appliance attendance mobilisations.</li> <li>8. Possible impact on surrounding stations: Shaftesbury 522 (104.4 per year/2.0 per week), Warminster 49 (9.8 per year), Amesbury 6 (1.2 per year), Salisbury 4 (0.8 per year) modelled responses.</li> <li>9. The closure of the station would mean that a primary response to any of these incidents would transfer to a neighbouring station.</li> <li>10. As mainly on-call stations, familiarisation time will take longer and will need to be planned as part of the quarterly training schedule.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Estimated annual Revenue saving of £180,670.</li> <li>2. Estimated Capital saving of £31,239 per year.</li> <li>3. Additional mobilisations may support the motivation and retention of surrounding stations.</li> <li>4. Stations will become familiar with additional risks.</li> <li>5. When compared to the DWFRS average, all incident average attendance time would be an increase of 0 minutes and 2 seconds extra if Mere Fire Station were to be closed.</li> <li>6. When compared to the DWFRS average, the two pump all incident average would increase by 0 minutes and 3 seconds.</li> </ol>

Table 18: Impacts and benefits of closing Mere Fire Station

## 11. Decision rationale summary

11.1. Table 19 gives a summary of the key data used to support the decision rationale, including the current performance, proposed performance and the impact of the proposed change.

Decision rationale summary: Mere Fire Station				
Criteria	Current	Proposed	Change	Commentary
Demand and Risk				
Number of modelled incidents where station is closest	319	N/A	N/A	Other DWFRS stations would attend these incidents
Number of modelled incidents where station is second closest	262	N/A	N/A	Other DWFRS stations would attend these incidents
First Appliance Response Standard	Property Fire with Sleeping Risk (10-minute response standard)			
	11 minutes 30 seconds	13 minutes 21 seconds	+1 minute 51 seconds	Additional five incidents would not have met response standard
	14 met / 15 not met	9 met / 20 not met		
	Property Fire without Sleeping Risk (10-minute response standard)			
	12 minutes 37 seconds	15 minutes 14 seconds	+2 minutes 37 seconds	Additional four incidents would not have met response standard
	7 met / 7 not met	3 met / 11 not met		
	Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) (15-minute response standard)			
	14 minutes 1 second	17 minutes 7 seconds	+3 minutes 6 seconds	Additional 36 incidents would not have met response standard
	53 met / 41 not met	17 met / 77 not met		
	Accidental Dwelling Fires (10-minute response standard)			
	11 minutes 37 seconds	13 minutes 28 seconds	+1 minute 51 seconds	Additional five incidents would not have met response standard
	13 met / 29 not met	8 met / 21 not met		
Second Appliance Response Standard	Property Fire with Sleeping Risk (13-minute response standard)			
	17 minutes 52 seconds	21 minutes 44 seconds	+3 minutes 52 seconds	No change in the number of incidents meeting response standard
	0 met / 29 not met	0 met / 29 not met		
	Property Fire without Sleeping Risk (15-minute response standard)			

	18 minutes 27 seconds	23 minutes 44 seconds	+5 minutes 17 seconds	Additional one incident would not have met response standard
	1 met / 13 not met	0 met / 14 not met		
	Accidental Dwelling Fires (13-minute response standard)			
	17 minutes 57 seconds	21 minutes 48 seconds	+3 minutes 51 seconds	No change in the number of incidents meeting response standard
0 met / 29 not met	0 met / 29 not met			
Station full cover equivalent (FCE) (Max 10)	Seven members of staff providing 55.34 % of the required contracted hours for a one pump on-call station			
Financial				
Financial (To include land ownership, covenants and MOUs if applicable)	£180,670 annual revenue budget saving £31,239 annual capital expenditure cost avoidance			
Impact Assessments				
People Impact Assessment – with mitigations	Negative impact due to loss of earnings and morale.			
Community Impact Assessment	Negative impact due to increased response times, mitigations are listed in Table 20.			

Table 19: Mere Fire Station summary table

11.2. The impact of removing Mere Fire Station will see an overall increase in response times and may mean that the first appliance may be waiting longer for additional resources. Mitigating the consequences posed by this increase can be seen in Table 20.

Impacts and Mitigations			
Impact	RAG	Mitigations	RAG with Mitigations
<b>Response time for first appliance at property fires with sleeping risk</b>		<p>Continue Service community engagement and Safe &amp; Well visits in Mere, with particular focus on those aged 65 or over.</p> <p>Continue Service business fire safety engagement and inspections in Mere.</p> <p>Continue recruitment to surrounding stations to ensure their appliance availability increases, with a focus on achieving five people available for each appliance.</p>	
<b>Response time for second appliance at property fires with sleeping risk</b>		<p>Continue Service community engagement and Safe &amp; Well visits in Mere, with particular focus on those aged 65 or over.</p> <p>Continue Service business fire safety engagement and inspections in Mere.</p> <p>Continue recruitment to surrounding stations to ensure their appliance availability increases, with a focus on achieving five people available for each appliance.</p>	
<b>Response time for first appliance at property fires without sleeping risk</b>		<p>Continue Service business fire safety engagement and inspections in Mere.</p> <p>Continue recruitment to surrounding stations to ensure their appliance availability increases, with a focus on achieving five people available for each appliance.</p>	
<b>Response time for second appliance at property fires without sleeping risk</b>		<p>Continue Service business fire safety engagement and inspections in Mere.</p> <p>Continue recruitment to surrounding stations to ensure their appliance availability increases, with a focus on achieving five people available for each appliance.</p>	
<b>Response time for first appliance at road traffic collision (RTC)</b>		Local staff management, succession planning and recruitment.	
<b>Response time for first appliance all incidents</b>		Local staff management, succession planning and recruitment.	
<b>Revenue Budget</b>		Money saved or reinvested to meet Service risk and demand.	
<b>Capital Programme (over 15-years)</b>		Money saved or reinvested to meet Service risk and demand.	
<b>Impact on surrounding stations</b>		Local staff management, succession planning and recruitment.	

Table 20: Mere Fire Station impacts and mitigations

## **12. Summary**

- 12.1. To achieve a sustainable and balanced budget for future years Mere Fire Station was shortlisted, at the MWG in March 2025, for a detailed review of its current response arrangements and performance, to enable Members to make a decision on its future viability.
- 12.2. Availability has varied from 82.10% averaged between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024 to 59.78% averaged between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.
- 12.3. Over the five-year review period, Mere Fire Station responded to 187 (58.62%) incidents where they were modelled as the closest appliance out of a possible 319 incidents, averaging 37.4 incidents per year, with 26.4 incidents on average per year being responded to by a neighbouring station instead of Mere Fire Station.
- 12.4. Across all incidents over the five-year period Mere Fire Station had a modelled 581 incidents (116.2 per year). However, they were actually mobilised 334 times to Service incidents over the same period (66.8 per year).
- 12.5. Should the station be closed, the average response times for incidents where Mere Fire Station would be part of the initial response, and where there is a response standard, would see an increase by between 1 minute 51 seconds and 3 minutes 06 seconds, for first appliance attendance.
- 12.6. Furthermore, the average response times for incidents where Mere Fire Station would be part of the initial response, and where there is a response standard, would increase by between 3 minutes 52 seconds and 5 minutes 17 seconds, for second appliance attendance, should the station be closed.
- 12.7. Annual revenue savings for Mere Fire Station are £180,670 and annual estimated capital costs are £31,239. The latest land valuation costs are £630,000 with estimated redundancy costs totalling £37,796.
- 12.8. The review has not identified any significant developments planned within the next three years in the Mere Fire Station administration area.
- 12.9. Analysis of the community demographics indicates that should Mere Fire Station close, the Service will continue prevention activities prioritising Mere's over 65 population, thatch properties and High Risk Safe & Well sites.
- 12.10. Mere Fire Station currently has limited appliance availability, which has decreased over the review period. With limited operational demand, a small population and no current or likely future significant risks, this suggests the costs of resourcing the station outweigh the benefits currently provided.
- 12.11. With the above in mind the risk benefit analysis focuses upon resilience within the area. Whilst appliance mobilisation is low, all incident data suggests attendance times will be increased should a decision to close Mere Fire Station be made.
- 12.12. The increase in response time risks that could be created by closure can be mitigated to a tolerable level through existing prevention measures, such as, Safe &

Well visits, business fire safety inspections and a focus on recruitment and retention to surrounding stations.

12.13. The benefits of any closure will see a revenue and capital saving to the Service, which will support the future sustainability of the Service and, where appropriate, enable investment into areas of the Service requiring strengthening due to risk, demand and vulnerabilities.

12.14. Taking account of this report, and both supporting appendices, the advice of the Chief Fire Officer, as the Authority's professional advisor, is that Members are asked to consider and recommend that Mere Fire Station should be the subject of public consultation and considered for closure by the Authority.

### **13. Next Steps**

13.1. The Member Working Group are currently reviewing all eight stations within their review programme. Once they have agreed which stations may be subject to public consultation, and approved a public consultation exercise, Members will report their recommendations to the Authority in February 2026.

13.2. It is anticipated that a final decision paper will need to be presented to the Authority in June 2026.