DORSET & WILTSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item 26-24

MEETING	Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority
DATE OF MEETING	30 June 2026
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Station Reviews - Outcome
STATUS OF REPORT	For publication
PURPOSE OF REPORT	For decision
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service (DWFRS) was established in April 2016 through the combination of Dorset Fire and Rescue Service and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service. The merger delivered recurring annual savings of £4.8m and created a stronger, more resilient organisation. Despite ongoing financial challenges, arising from successive single-year funding settlements, the Service has maintained a strong track record of delivering efficiencies and transformation. Over the past decade, the Service's Savings and Reinvestment Programme (most recently known as the Resource & Savings Programme) has delivered more than £15m of recurring annual savings, including £6.75m over the last four years. Whilst central Government have now provided a three-year Local Government Finance Settlement, for the first time in a decade, reductions in direct central Government funding mean the Authority continues to face forecast revenue budget deficits over the medium-term. In response, the Service has further progressed with its Resource & Savings programme to ensure it remains financially sustainable, operationally effective and aligned to future risks and community needs. As part of this work, the Authority has considered the future of eight fire stations through a station review programme overseen by a Members' Working Group, established in June 2024.

	Following approval by the Authority in February 2026, all eight stations were subject to a 12-week public consultation undertaken in accordance with the Gunning Principles. The consultation generated significant public, stakeholder and parliamentary engagement and has contributed to central support for the Authority to pursue an application for precept flexibility for 2027-28. Should sufficient precept flexibility be granted, to bring the Authority's B and D precept closer to the national average for standalone fire and rescue authorities, the Service would be better placed to address its medium-term financial challenges and deliver its updated modernisation programme in a structured and sustainable manner. This is however subject to wider Government funding remaining broadly consistent with current assumptions and this cannot be guaranteed. This report presents the outcomes of the consultation process, together with the recommendations of the Members' Working Group, to support the Authority's decision-making. The recommendations support the Service's ongoing modernisation agenda, which is a key component of the wider discussions with Government regarding future financial sustainability and precept flexibility. Should the Authority agree with the recommendations before them, the Service will begin to timeline and progress the delivery of its Modernisation Programme, ensuring it remains efficient, effective and focused on delivering value for money, public safety and services that meet the changing needs of the communities it serves.
RISK ASSESSMENT	Future financial sustainability remains an increasing strategic risk for the Authority. This risk is reviewed quarterly by the Finance and Audit Committee and reported to the Authority every six months through performance monitoring arrangements. To maintain long-term financial sustainability and resilience, the Authority must deliver further recurring annual savings. At the same time, the changing risk landscape and the ongoing need for fire and rescue service reform require the Service to continue aligning resources to areas of greatest need, ensuring it remains fit for purpose and able to meet the demands of a modern fire and rescue service. This must be supported by targeted reinvestment and change to ensure resources are used effectively, efficiently, and deliver best value.

	As the Service is already operating with lean resources, difficult decisions regarding operational response are now required. The recommendations set out within this paper are not without risk; however, they have been identified as the options that present the lowest overall risk to service delivery, organisational resilience, and the Authority's long-term financial sustainability. Failure to achieve the necessary savings would present significant governance and financial challenges for the Authority. An assessment of risk and demand for each station has been provided in Annex 1, which provides risk levels and ratings against themes within the report and appendices.
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT	None for the purposes of this report. Impact assessments formed part of each station review paper (published February 2026)
PEOPLE IMPACT ASSESSMENT	Full internal and external people impact assessments have been undertaken to support the review of each station. These are included as Appendix P 1-8. The Area profiles, which formed part of the papers and appendices published for the Authority meeting in February 2026, have been used to support and inform the assessments.
BUDGET IMPLICATIONS	Over the past ten years, the Authority has delivered cumulative annual revenue budget savings of £15.1m. Despite this achievement, maintaining the long-term financial stability of the Service has remained a key strategic risk. At the Authority meeting in February 2024, a forecast revenue medium-term budget deficit of £2.5m was identified. An improved financial position was subsequently reported to the Fire Authority in February 2025, reflecting decisions taken and savings achieved through the Service's Resource & Savings Programme. The 2026–27 Local Government Finance Settlement was the first multi-year finance settlement in a decade, covering the next three financial years. Although the overall level of funding has increased, direct contributions from central Government are due to reduce, meaning a budget deficit is still forecast. The budget approved by the Fire Authority in February 2026 included a forecast deficit of £1.207m in 2026–27, increasing to £1.470m in 2027–28 and £1.705m in 2028–29.

	Whilst additional pressures in 2026-27 are likely, significant progress has also been made by Officers in recent months to address the forecast deficit with several temporary one-off increases in funding. This includes the Service recently receiving confirmation that an application for £1.8m of grant funding, linked to data transformation work, now completed, has been approved. This funding will be received imminently and will provide the Service with additional funds that can be used to address the budget deficit in 2026-27. Furthermore, since the announcement of the public consultation and through subsequent and ongoing engagement with the Fire Minister and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), the Service will be supported to develop an application for potential Council tax precept flexibility for 2027-28. This will commence late 2026 with the Service intent to progress an application that clearly demonstrates the need for flexibility, the benefits to local communities, and the contribution it would make to maintaining a sustainable and resilient fire and rescue service. Formal decision from this application will not be made until February 2027. Future decisions should therefore take this uncertainty into account.
RECOMMENDATIONS	The Authority: 1) Agree that all 8 fire stations, namely, Bradford on Avon, Cranborne, Charmouth, Hamworthy, Maiden Newton, Mere, Ramsbury and Wilton fire stations remain open; 2) Agree to the implementation of the Service's Modernisation Programme; SUBJECT TO; a) The Authority being granted flexibility to raise council tax precept to at least the national average for fire services for 2027-28, b) The subsequent approval of the council tax precept rise by the Authority at its meeting in February 2027; and c) There are no other and further significant reductions in funding 3) Should all of these conditions, in a), b) and c) above not be met, confirmation of which will be clear in budget setting papers presented to the Authority in February 2027, the Authority agree that all eight fire stations, namely, Bradford on Avon, Cranborne, Charmouth, Hamworthy, Maiden Newton, Mere, Ramsbury and Wilton will be closed.

BACKGROUND PAPERS	• Fire Cover Review 2023 • Community Safety Plan 2024-28 • Medium-Term Finance Plan 2025-26 to 2028-29 • Fire Authority Paper (Establishment of Members' Working Group) June 2024 • Station Reviews (and Appendices) February 2026 • Service Resource & Savings Programme 2024-2026 • Service Estate Rationalisation Programme 2025-2028
APPENDICES	Appendix A – Premier Advisory Group Consultation Report Appendix B – Data Assurance Appendix C – Service Modernisation Programme 2026-2029 Appendix D – Corporate Staffing Levels Appendix E – Seasonal Variations Appendix F – Local Plans – Housing Growth Appendix G – Wildfire Analysis Appendix H – Flooding Analysis Appendix I – Thatch Analysis Appendix J – 2021-26 Incident Data Appendix K – Availability Analysis Appendix L – Impact on Fire Cover Appendix M – Response Times Appendix N – Scale of Incidents • Incident Appliance Requirements Profile • Concurrent Demand Analysis • Analysis of 10+ Appliance Incidents • Incident Duration Analysis • Extreme Demand Analysis Summary Appendix O – Availability Modelling by Staffing Levels Appendix P – Impact Assessments 1. Bradford on Avon Impact Assessment 2. Charmouth Impact Assessment 3. Cranborne Impact Assessment 4. Hamworthy Impact Assessment 5. Maiden Newton Impact Assessment 6. Mere Impact Assessment 7. Ramsbury Impact Assessment 8. Wilton Impact Assessment Annex 1. Assessment of Risk & Demand
REPORT ORIGINATOR	Name: Cllr Kevin Small, Members' Working Group Chair. Email: democratic.services@dwfire.org.uk

1. Background

Community Safety Plan

1.1 The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2018 require Fire and Rescue Authorities to produce a Community Risk Management Plan covering at least a three-year period. The Authority fulfils this requirement through its Community Safety Plan (CSP).

1.2 The most recent CSP (2024-2028) was approved by the Authority in June 2024. It was written taking account of a wide range of strategic factors including the need to address the projected annual budget deficit over the medium term.

1.3 To support the development of the CSP, the Service conducted a comprehensive Fire Cover Review (FCR) in 2023. This review used four years' worth of data that was garnered from the harmonisation of management information systems following combination. A station-by-station analysis was undertaken, looking at current and future demand, risk and vulnerabilities.

1.4 The delivery of the FCR ensured the Service has:

- A clear understanding of existing operational demand against both statutory and non-statutory duties.
- A clear understanding of current and emerging risks facing the Service.
- A clear understanding of the appliance and resource availability required to meet current and future risk and demand, across all Service areas.
- Evidence of the crewing models suitable to meet station risk and demand.
- Information to identify stations where appliance numbers could be reduced or more efficiently used.
- Information to identify stations where crewing numbers could be reduced or more efficiently used.

1.5 The CSP sets out a number of commitments. These are aimed at improving financial sustainability, modernising the Service, increasing efficiency and productivity, and ensuring resources are aligned to current and future risk and demand. To support the sustainability of the Service these commitments include:

- Reviewing the efficiency and productivity of our fire stations, including the number and type of response vehicles needed, in relation to the risks, demand, and future financial sustainability.
- Reviewing the shift systems our firefighters are working considering demand, risk, and future financial sustainability whilst maximising productivity.

- Using the FCR to inform decision making on matching resources to risk whilst maintaining financial sustainability.
- Regularly review the requirement of low operational availability and low community risk fire engines and fire station.

Financial History

1.6 The original business case for combining the two Services projected £4.4m annual savings, with £4.8m achieved. These savings were achieved through:

- Combining senior leadership and support functions.
- Creating a single headquarters and governance structure.
- Merging control rooms into one Service Control Centre.
- Rationalising back-office and administrative functions.
- Joint procurement and shared contracts.
- Improved resilience and flexibility in service delivery as part of a larger organisation.

1.7 The combination created greater operational resilience and flexibility across a larger Service and enabled the protection of frontline service delivery despite ongoing financial pressures.

1.8 Ongoing single-year financial settlements from central Government have continued to present significant challenges for the Service in accurately forecasting its medium-term financial position with any degree of certainty. This lack of longer-term funding assurance provided challenges in undertaking effective long-term financial planning, investment and reform, particularly in the context of rising unfunded national pay awards, inflationary pressures, increasing demand, and the need to modernise the Service to meet current and future community risk.

1.9 The budget, approved by the Fire Authority in February 2024, included details of a need to deliver savings totalling £2.5m over the next 12 - 24 months, to help address a forecast budget deficit position of £3.1m in 2027-28. Due to the Service's savings programme, a slightly improved position was reported at the Fire Authority in February 2025 with the revised budget deficit position outlined to Members as £1.38m in 2026-27, £1.51m in 2027-28 and £1.76m in 2028-29.

1.10 Despite the challenging financial situation, the has Service continued to demonstrate a strong and proven track record of identifying and delivering financial savings.

Successful Savings and Reinvestment Programme

1.11 In response to this challenging and increasingly complex financial position, the Service has implemented successful savings and reinvestment

programmes, most recently named internally as the Resource & Savings programme (RSP). This has been designed to ensure that public money is used effectively and directed towards current and future fire and rescue service needs.

1.12 For the ten-year period ending in March 2026, the Service has achieved more than £15m in recurring annual revenue budget savings, with the total cumulative savings reaching £82.1m over this period. This is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

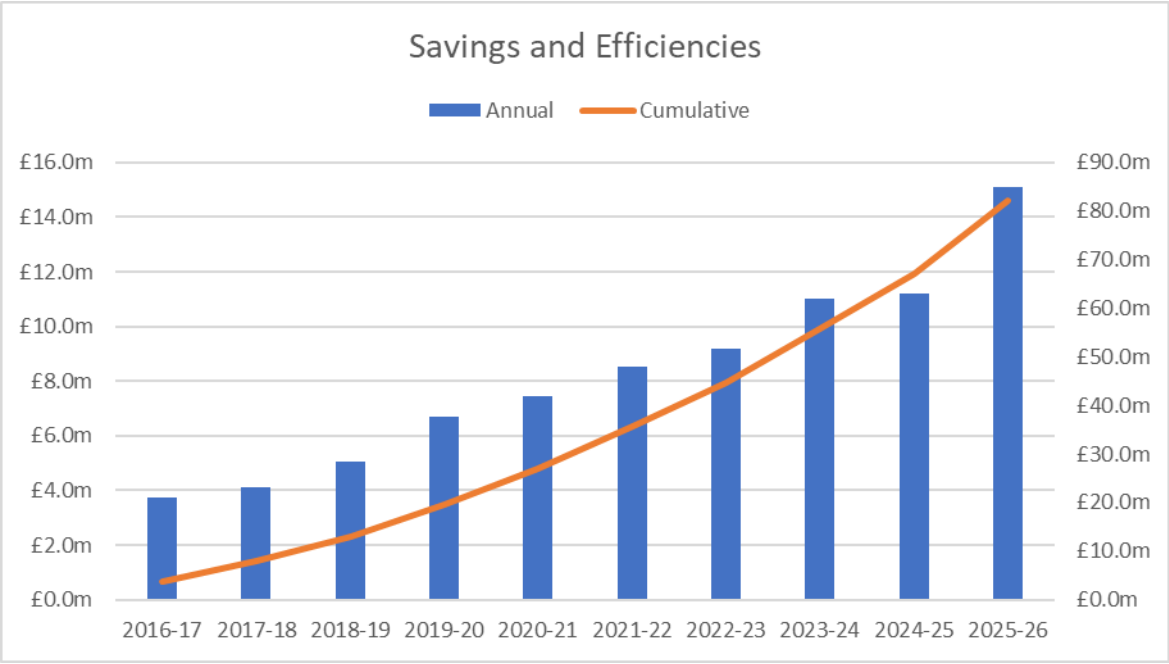


Figure 1: Annual revenue budget saving since 2016-17

1.13 Rather than simply seeking to maintain the status quo and only look for savings, the programme has focused on delivering efficiencies, releasing recurring savings, and enabling targeted reinvestment into priority areas of risk, demand and service modernisation.

1.14 This approach has supported the continued delivery of a safe, effective and resilient Service while improving value for money for the communities served.

1.15 In recent years our corporate teams have operated within an increasingly complex and demanding external environment, shaped by a series of high-profile national incidents and subsequent public inquiries, including the Grenfell Tower fire and the Manchester Arena incident. These events have led to significant and direct changes for fire and rescue services in expectations around governance, assurance, compliance, and multi-agency working, alongside a substantial increase in inspection, reporting and regulatory requirements. In parallel, corporate teams have had to respond to evolving national policy reforms, heightened public scrutiny, and growing demands for transparency and performance data, all while managing ongoing financial

constraints. Together, these factors have placed additional pressure on already lean corporate functions, requiring continual adaptation to support operational delivery and maintain organisational resilience.

1.16 In response to this over the past three years every corporate department is annually reviewed. This ensures that corporate functions are appropriately aligned to modern fire and rescue service requirements, enabling and supporting effective operational delivery to our communities.

1.17 The Service has also utilised existing budgetary provisions to support targeted reinvestment in response to evolving risk and demand, including the conversion of on-call stations to day duty arrangements, the transition of a day duty station to a 24/7 wholetime model, and the allocation of additional wholetime firefighter posts to higher-risk areas, ensuring resources are more effectively aligned to operational need, rather than the legacy position.

1.18 It is through the savings and reinvestment programmes that the £15.1m worth of reoccurring annual savings have been made, including £6.75m within the past four years. These permanent savings include £2.3m across corporate teams, £576k for senior management, £1.2m contractual savings, £1.1m non-staffing budget reductions, £578k across the estate and fleet and £1m in revised ways of working.

2. Independent Assurance – Efficiency of Service

2.1 The Service’s efficiency arrangements are subject to independent assurance and external scrutiny, including inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). Across all three full inspection cycles, the Service has consistently received positive assessments, achieving grades of ‘Good’ or above, most recently within the February 2023 inspection report.

2.2 The inspectorate report, on their website, that firefighter cost per person per year within Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service (DWFRS) is £25.03, compared with a national average of £30.80 (for 2024-25). In addition, they report that over the previous five-year period, Service local costs have increased by 14.7%, which is notably lower than the national average increase of 29.0%.

2.3 This demonstrates the effectiveness of the Service’s long-term financial planning, alongside the reinvestment and savings programme, with maintaining costs below national averages while continuing to meet community needs.

2.4 Furthermore, the Authority receives independent assurance over the effectiveness of the Service’s governance, risk management, and internal

control arrangements through the work of South West Audit Partnership (SWAP), the Authority's appointed internal auditors.

2.5 SWAP provides regular reports and an annual audit opinion to the Finance and Audit Committee following independent reviews across key financial, operational, and governance systems. The Service has received an overall 'Substantial Assurance' (*a sound system of governance, risk management and control exist with internal controls operating effectively and being consistently applied to support the achievement of objectives in the area audited*) opinion from SWAP for four consecutive years, providing the Authority with strong independent assurance regarding the robustness and effectiveness of its control environment and governance arrangements that is fully reported through the Finance and Audit Committee.

3. Current Financial Position (2026/2027-2028/2029)

3.1 For the first time in a decade, central Government provided a three-year multi-year financial settlement for the Authority. Based on a starting position of £76,373,721, core spending power was forecast to increase by 4.06% in 2026-27 and by 11.76% over the three-year period. The settlement also included £5 council tax precept flexibility in each year, with Government assumptions based on this being applied through the annual budget-setting approval process.

3.2 While the settlement detailed the overall estimated funding position, the only element directly controlled by central Government is the Revenue Support Grant, which is forecast to reduce by £1.2m per year, a total decrease of 19.5% over the three-year period.

3.3 In contrast, council tax and business rates income are determined locally. Table 1**Error! Reference source not found.**, below, sets out the confirmed 2026-27 position alongside forecast figures for the remainder of the settlement period

	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Council Tax Requirement	57,388,832	60,891,682	64,452,934
Fair Funding Assessment:			
-Baseline Funding Level	8,959,205	9,179,518	9,364,700
-Revenue Support Grant	12,757,773	11,552,933	10,268,214
Assessed Core Spending Power	**79,105,810**	**81,624,133**	**84,085,848**

Table 1: Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service funding settlement

3.4 The figures for 2027-28 and 2028-29 are indicative only and could change, with final budgets and funding levels confirmed through the usual annual budget-setting and consultation processes each year.

3.5 Following a period of consultation, the Local Government Finance Settlement was confirmed on 9 February 2026. Whilst £15m of additional funding was allocated to the sector between the provisional and final settlement, none of this funding was allocated to this Authority.

3.6 The Government has simplified the Fair Funding Assessment within the settlement, but the overall trend remains unchanged: reductions in central Government funding are offset by increased council tax flexibility. As a result, the Authority's reliance on council tax is expected to rise from 71% in 2025–26 to 77% in 2028–29, assuming a £5 annual precept increase.

3.7 The medium-term deficit forecast is influenced by a range of external factors outside the Authority's direct control, including persistently high inflation and uncertainty around nationally negotiated pay awards. This represents a significant risk given that approximately 75% of the Authority's annual expenditure relates to employee costs.

3.8 When all factors are taken into consideration, the settlement did not materially change the Authority's medium-term position. Although overall funding increased, this was offset by reductions in central Government contributions. The revenue budget approved by the Fire Authority in February 2026 included a forecast deficit of £1.207m in 2026–27, increasing to £1.470m in 2027–28 and £1.705m in 2028–29.

3.9 The budget projections included pay awards aligned to the actual annual growth seen locally in core spending power. A 3.58% pay award was therefore built into the Service's revenue budget for 2026-27. National pay negotiations that result in pay awards exceeding this growth will increase the budget deficit, not only for 2026-27 but future years. With the current 2026-27 negotiations highlighting a potential 3.8% pay award, this would increase the Service's revenue budget requirements by an increased £114k this year.

3.10 Whilst additional pressures in 2026-27 are likely, significant progress has also been made by Officers in recent months to address the forecast deficit with several temporary **one-off** increases in funding. A recent legal prosecution has led to the recovery of £22k of costs, which had not been expected or budgeted for. the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have recently confirmed that the Service will receive £50k of remediation funding, linked to the Government's recent Remediation Bill. Lastly, and crucially, the Service has recently had confirmation that an application for £1.8m of grant funding linked to data transformation work now completed has been approved. This funding will be received imminently and will provide the Service with additional funds that can be used to address the budget deficit in 2026-27. A full update on this will be presented to Finance and Audit Committee in September 2026.

3.11 Whilst the revised position for 2026-27 is clearly welcome, the progress made is due to temporary one-off factors, rather than recurring permanent increases in income. Further pressures continue to be identified for future financial years as well, usually due to factors that the Services does not directly control. Employer pension contribution rates are the latest example of an external factor outside of the Services control, as they are set externally via periodic scheme valuations. Recently, in May 2026, HM Treasury announced changes to the underlying pension discount rate which influences those calculations. The impact on the employer firefighter pension contribution rate will be confirmed later this year and will take effect from April 2027.

3.12 The pension position, together with ongoing uncertainty around pay awards, sustained inflationary pressures above target levels, and wider international and economic factors, continues to create financial uncertainty and presents a significant challenge to the Service's long-term financial sustainability and planning

3.13 Considering these pressures and the permanent impact created, the Service's financial sustainability continues to present a significant challenge for the Authority, which is under a statutory duty to set a balanced budget each year. One-off boosts to income in 2026-27 do not change the underlying need for action to deliver ongoing financial sustainability for the Service.

3.14 Under Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1999 fire and rescue authorities must *"make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which their functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness".* The Service must demonstrate ongoing improvement in how they deliver all functions, operational, prevention, protection, governance, workforce, finance, estates, procurement and collaboration. Every decision must show regard to:

- Economy – minimising costs.
- Efficiency – maximising output for the resources used.
- Effectiveness – achieving intended outcomes.

3.15 Maintaining financial resilience will therefore require continued careful planning, prioritisation of resources, and ongoing assessment of affordability within the context of prevailing economic and workforce pressures. This underlines the ongoing requirement for the Service to deliver further savings, alongside targeted reinvestment to support continued organisational improvement and enhance operational availability. This is necessary to ensure the Service remains aligned to current and emerging risk profiles, while maintaining resilience and improving efficiency in service delivery.

3.16 It also reflects the Authority's responsibility to ensure that public funds are used effectively, efficiently, and in the best interests of the communities it serves.

3.17 In response to this, the Service's Modernisation Programme builds upon and supersedes the previous RSP, representing the next phase of structured transformation for the Service. The Modernisation Programme is therefore an evolution of the RSP, with an updated scope and title, rather than a wholly new initiative. Members have been regularly updated on the progress, delivery and outcomes of the RSP through Member seminars, and this established approach to Member engagement and oversight will continue throughout the delivery of the Modernisation Programme.

4. Service Modernisation Programme

4.1 While change can be difficult, it is and has been necessary to ensure the Service remains resilient, sustainable, and appropriately equipped to meet the needs of current and future communities.

4.2 Continuing to operate as the Service always has done is no longer sufficient in the context of changing risks, increasing demand, and financial pressures. Instead, the Service must focus on building a modern, resilient Service that is designed for the future, one that is adaptable, evidence-led, and capable of responding effectively to evolving community needs.

4.3 The Modernisation programme 2026-2029, Appendix C, comprises both the continuation of existing projects and the implementation of new initiatives, which include:

- A second white fleet review.
- Estate rationalisation programme.
- Introduction of smaller response vehicle.
- A station optimisation programme.
- Wholetime flexible working.
- Special Appliance review.
- Wider second-away review.
- Modernisation of firefighting PPE and breathing apparatus.
- Investment in contaminant reduction measures to improve firefighter health & wellbeing.
- Digital, data and technology transformation.

4.4 The pace, scale and prioritisation of this change programme will continue to be heavily influenced by the Service's financial position. Maintaining the status quo is not a viable option; the Service must continue to evolve to meet changing demand, current and future risks and needs, and the expectations of

the communities it serves. Securing Council Tax precept flexibility is therefore critical to enabling the Service to move forward with confidence, providing greater financial stability and resilience while supporting investment in transformation, workforce development, operational capability and service improvement. It would allow the Service to deliver required efficiencies and savings through a more measured, sustainable and strategically planned approach. Given the significance of precept flexibility to the future sustainability of the Service, it is essential that strong political engagement and advocacy are maintained at both local and national levels to maximise the prospects of a successful application and secure the funding necessary to deliver the Service's Modernisation Programme.

5. Financial Lobbying

5.1 The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) and Treasurer continue to actively engage with Members of Parliament in relation to the Service's financial position. Since taking up post in January 2025, the CFO has maintained regular communication with local and regional Members of Parliament (MP), including at least eight written representations to each MP over this time, as well as numerous meetings locally and in Westminster.

5.2 This ongoing engagement, supported by Authority Members, forms an important part of wider efforts to raise awareness of the financial challenges faced by the Service and to advocate for sustainable, long-term funding arrangements that support the delivery of effective fire and rescue services.

5.3 The Station Review public consultation programme generated significant parliamentary engagement and support, with a number of Dorset and Wiltshire MPs now actively raising concerns on behalf of their constituencies through Early Day Motions and questions in Parliament, including at Prime Minister's Questions.

5.4 In response, the Prime Minister confirmed that the Government would continue to engage with the issues raised and consider the concerns brought forward regarding fire and rescue service funding and local resilience. This level of parliamentary attention reflects the breadth of stakeholder interest in the proposals and the importance of the issues being considered by the Service.

5.5 Since the consultation launch, Local MP's have supported the Service's continued engagement positively with both the Fire Minister and the MHCLG officials, with the primary aim of improving the Services funding position. This has largely focused on lobbying for increased precept flexibility.

5.6 The engagement thus far has been positive, and both the Fire Minister and the MHCLG fire funding team have acknowledged the challenging position of

the Service and are supportive. MHCLG have committed to assisting the Service in their work to secure improved financial sustainability, including through supporting an application for increased precept flexibility in 2027-28. This support is provided with the caveat that the Authority will commit to a credible programme of Service reform and modernisation.

5.7 It is, however, important to note neither the Fire Minister nor the Fire Funding team within MHCLG are able to make this decision unilaterally. They will support the Service but the final decision sits with HM Treasury and ultimately the Prime Minister's office and will be considered alongside broader local government finance settlement policy decisions.

5.8 Whilst the Fire Minister and the Fire Funding team are supportive, they have been clear that a final decision from HM Treasury cannot be made until the next Local Government finance settlement is confirmed. The provisional settlement is typically released just before Christmas and confirmed in early February.

5.9 If sufficient precept flexibility were to be granted to enable the Authority to increase the precept, at a minimum to bring the Service in line with the national average Band D income for standalone fire and rescue services, this would provide greater financial stability and support the CFO in delivering the Service's Modernisation Programme in a more structured, sustainable, and measured way. This would be, however, on the proviso that the other funding streams the Service receive via the Local Government Finance Settlement process remain similar to those outlined in the 2026-27 settlement. Increased precept flexibility but associated further reductions in revenue support grant does not improve the bottom-line position, and provide the financial sustainability required.

5.10 For context, the Band D national average precept for 2026-27 is £100.72, with the Service at £96.95, £3.77 below the national average. If the Authority was given flexibility to increase the precept in 2027-28 to £8.77, instead of the current threshold of £5, then this would enable the Fire Authority to align the Service to the national average precept.

5.11 Assuming that the underlying tax base would also increase by 0.90%, which is reflective of the typical standard tax base growth the Service has seen over the last three financial years, this would generate approximately £2.252m of additional income in 2027-28 and £2.272m in 2028-29. This would put the Service in a more sustainable financial position across the medium term, although uncertainty still remains across global conflict and pay award pressures.

5.12 Accordingly, this report recommendations, for consideration by the Authority, are dependent on the confirmation of additional funding and an improved overall financial position. It is expected that the outcome of the application for precept flexibility will be confirmed in February 2027.

5.13 Furthermore, the Service and Authority remain committed to ongoing engagement with Members of Parliament and central Government to secure the best possible outcomes for our communities, both now and in the future. This will include continued engagement throughout the rest of year to secure the necessary precept flexibility for 2027-28 and wider funding support required to maintain a sustainable financial position. The importance of securing this support should not be underestimated, as the consequences of not doing so would be significant for the Service and are set out in detail within this report.

6. Station Review Project

6.1 As evidenced above, over the past decade, the Service has delivered significant financial savings and efficiencies in response to continued pressures on public sector funding, wider economic climate and the changing risk demand.

6.2 While every effort has been made to protect frontline service delivery and maintain operational resilience, the ongoing financial position required the Service to undertake a comprehensive review of its operating model to ensure it remains sustainable, proportionate, and aligned to current and future risk.

6.3 The Station Review project was commissioned in 2024 to identify the lowest risk and most financially responsible options for stations with comparatively low levels of operational demand and community risk.

6.4 The review considered a range of factors including incident activity, response standards, crewing arrangements, community risk profiles, and the efficient use of public resources.

6.5 Whilst the financial position of the Service instigated this work, alongside the savings, the objective of the project was to ensure that the correct level of resources is targeted where they are most needed, while continuing to provide an effective, resilient, and equitable service to communities, within the financial envelope available.

6.6 Any decisions relating to the potential closure of fire stations falls outside the delegated powers of the CFO. Therefore, during the Authority meeting in June 2024, Members agreed the requirement for a Members' Working Group (MWG) to direct the work for the Station Reviews.

6.7 The Authority confirmed that the group should consist of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority, Chair and Vice Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee and the Local Performance and Scrutiny Chairs.

6.8 The MWG first met in November 2024 to set the direction for the review and during 2025 undertook their scrutiny of the data and reports.

6.9 The selection criteria, methodology, and overall approach underpinning the Station Review project were set out in detail within the reports presented to the Authority in February 2026, at which the Authority considered and approved recommendations for the eight stations to proceed to public consultation regarding potential closure.

6.10 These stations are:

- Bradford on Avon
- Charmouth
- Cranborne
- Hamworthy
- Maiden Newton
- Mere
- Ramsbury
- Wilton

7. Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

7.1 Members approved the stakeholder management plan and consultation programme at the full Authority meeting on 10 February 2026. The consultation process commenced on the 13 February 2026 and ran until the 15 May 2026 at 5pm.

7.2 The process was independently administered by Premier Advisory Group (PAG). Members can be assured that the process met the statutory consultation requirements, including compliance with the Gunning Principles and this was reviewed and validated by the Authority's Monitoring Officer.

7.3 The consultation process, highlighted in Appendix A, included information sharing through a leaflet, video, social media and the Service's website; 17 in person public consultation sessions at impacted locations and eight online sessions in addition to electronic and paper-based surveys.

7.4 The purpose of the consultation was to ensure that members of the public and all stakeholders were provided with access to the information relating to the proposals and given the opportunity to raise questions, concerns, mitigations, and alternative options for the Authority to consider as part of their decision making.

7.5 An interim consultation report was provided by PAG highlighting the themes emerging from the process up until 18 March 2026. This was shared with the Authority Chair, Vice Chair and Chair of the MWG, and later discussed with the MWG during their April meeting.

7.6 The final consultation report (Appendix A) has been provided by PAG. This independent report provides an objective summary and analysis of the feedback received through the Station Closure consultation process. Their report provides analysis from the completed surveys, includes the views expressed by stakeholders at public meetings and the submission of any petitions.

7.7 The report (Appendix A) also documents, in Annex 1, page 60, the error that was identified on the 20 April and rectified on the 27 April. The error related to a missing question *"Do you have any alternative suggestions that the Authority should consider instead of, or alongside, the current proposals".* It is noteworthy that both surveys included the question *"is there anything else you would like the Authority to consider before making a final decision?"* and therefore all surveys provided the opportunity for a responder to provide their thoughts on anything else, and this may have included alternative suggestions.

7.8 Mitigations were immediately proposed by PAG to rectify the issue, and this was reported to the Clerk and Monitoring Officer. The Clerk and Monitoring Officer took immediate advice from Counsel in respect of the missing question to ensure the soundness of the ongoing consultation process and the mitigations that had been proposed. The Clerk and Monitoring Officer, on consideration of the advice received, were happy the legal risk associated with the advice could be contained and immediately took action to implement all the mitigations.

7.9 The consultation programme resulted in 5,818 online survey responses and 370 paper responses, with 1,109 people attending the 17 in person public meetings and 104 people over the eight online sessions.

7.10 Demographic data was collected through the consultation survey, as well as the role of attendees at the series of public meetings.

7.11 The majority of survey respondents were local residents (91.1%), with 2.1% identifying as DWFRS staff, 1.9% as business owners, and 1.0% as elected officials.

7.12 Consultation responses across all stations were disproportionately received from older age groups, with 37.8% from those aged 65 and over. Younger age groups were underrepresented, including those aged 16–24 (2.3%) and 25–34 (6.8%).

7.13 It is acknowledged that younger age groups were underrepresented in survey responses. However, the consultation programme included a range of engagement methods specifically designed to reach and encourage participation from younger people, including accessible online survey channels, open public meetings, and targeted communication through digital platforms. These measures were designed to ensure that individuals of all ages were actively provided with accessible and meaningful opportunities to engage with and contribute to the consultation process.

7.14 Survey responses were also disproportionately received from female respondents across all age groups, with females accounting for 56.9% of responses compared with 39.5% from males. While female respondents were more highly represented, the imbalance was not considered sufficient to invalidate the findings.

7.15 In addition to the public consultation process, briefing sessions were held with stakeholders where the Authority was able to share information ahead of the public consultation events and encourage all feedback through the consultation process.

7.16 Furthermore, throughout the course of the consultation, various petitions have been received, these were from:

- Save Charmouth Fire Station (1,223 signatories).
- Maiden Newton Fire Station (1,995 signatories).
- Mere Fire Station (459 signatories).
- Fire Brigade Union (petition findings were not submitted to PAG so number of signatories cannot be verified).

8. Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement Themes

8.1 The PAG report, set out in full at Appendix A, provides a comprehensive account of the key insights and themes arising from the consultation programme, with a high-level overview of the main findings presented below.

8.2 The sentiment across the Service area, has identified that:

- **Opposition and Support**: Responses indicate limited support, with 89.1% either opposed or strongly opposed.
- **Recognition of Financial Position**: The public events indicated an appreciation for the transparency regarding the Service's financial position.
- **Council Tax**: Sentiment during the public meetings as well as the survey responses indicate there is a level of interest in increasing council tax contributions to support the Service.

8.3 Analysis of both the questions raised throughout the consultation process and the survey responses received identified a number of recurring themes relating to the potential closure of fire stations, the consultation process itself, financial considerations, and the data and evidence underpinning the proposals. These themes were:

- **Data Assumptions:** Concerns that the report did not include the most up to date data. There was also calls for greater transparency around methodology, station selection criteria, and supporting operational datasets.
- **Response Times:** Concerns that station closures would increase emergency response times and that modelling does not fully reflect real-world conditions, mobilising delays, congestion and rural travel challenges.
- **Rurality and Wider System**: Concerns raised that the geography across the Service area places residents at greater risk due to its rural nature. Thatched properties were also raised as an additional risk.
- **Demographics across the Service Area:** Concerns were shared regarding the elderly population across the Service area. In addition, worries in relation to growth in seasonal tourism were raised.
- **Neighbouring Stations:** Concerns that the proposals place increased reliance on neighbouring stations despite existing availability pressures and limited capacity to absorb more incidents.
- **Future Risk:** Concerns that increasing climate-related risks, including flooding, wildfires and extreme weather, alongside future risk through national initiatives and local plans, increasing the amount of housing.

8.4 Through both the public meetings and survey responses, stakeholders were provided with the opportunity to raise concerns relating to the specific local characteristics and operational contexts of the fire stations proposed for closure.

8.5 Listed in Table 2 are the local themes specific to each of the eight stations.

Station	Local Themes
Bradford on Avon	Flooding/water/rivers Rurality/remoteness Traffic/congestion/narrow roads New/proposed housing Elderly/vulnerable population Thatched/heritage properties Tourism
Charmouth	Tourism Rurality/remoteness Traffic/congestion/narrow roads Proximity to major roads New/proposed housing
Cranborne	Rurality/remoteness

	New/proposed housing Climate change/Wildfire Traffic/congestion/narrow roads
Hamworthy	Tourism Unique geography/bridge access Traffic/congestion/narrow roads New/proposed housing Climate change/wildfire Local industry (port)
Maiden Newton	Rurality/remoteness Tourism Flooding/water/rivers Traffic/congestion/narrow roads Thatched/heritage properties Climate change/wildfire Proximity to major roads New/proposed housing
Mere	Rurality/remoteness Proximity to major roads New/proposed housing Traffic/congestion/narrow roads Tourism
Ramsbury	Rurality/remoteness Traffic/congestion/narrow roads Thatched/heritage properties Elderly/vulnerable population New/proposed housing Proximity to major roads
Wilton	Rurality/remoteness New/proposed housing Thatched/heritage properties Traffic/congestion/narrow roads

Table 2: Local consultation themes specific to each of the eight stations

8.6 The themes and concerns arising from the consultation responses have been carefully analysed and reflected in the preparation of this report and its appendices, with further detailed consideration provided later in the report and, where relevant, within the individual sections relating to each fire station.

9. Analysis of Key Themes

9.1 This section of the report provides an initial analysis of the key themes; alongside additional areas of interest and scrutiny raised through the MWG. The purpose of this analysis is to further support understanding of the consultation feedback and wider considerations, ensuring that Members are provided with a clear and structured evidence base to inform the Authority's decision-making process.

9.2 A suite of supporting appendices is provided alongside this section of the report, to provide further detail and evidence, referenced as Appendices B–O.

9.3 **Data Assumptions**

9.4 Feedback received through the consultation process raised a number of queries and challenges relating to the assumptions, modelling approach, transparency, and interpretation of the data used to inform the proposals.

9.5 As part of the overall assurance framework, the Service commissioned an independent organisation, specialising in data analysis, risk modelling and strategic planning, to undertake a comprehensive review of the analytical methodology, providing external scrutiny and validation of the approach, assumptions, and use of data underpinning the proposals.

9.6 This report (Appendix B) has been redacted primarily to protect personal and identifying information relating to the individual commissioned to undertake the review and their staff. The redactions do not affect the report's findings, methodology or conclusions, all of which remain available to provide independent assurance to the Authority. The redactions applied are limited to what is required to comply with the Authority's duties under the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 and have been applied solely to protect personal and identifying information.

9.7 The independent review focused specifically on the technical aspects of the methodology, including:

- the data sources used in the analysis.
- the construction of response time calculations.
- the modelling approach used to represent incident coverage.
- the analytical methods used to assess the redistribution of demand following station changes.

9.8 The key findings from the report included:

- The analytical methodology provides a reasonable and credible framework for examining how incident demand and response coverage may change under different station configurations.
- The use of a coverage-based approach is common in fire cover analysis and provides a reasonable way of examining the impact of station changes.
- Across the technical elements that have been reviewed, the methodology used appear suitable for the purposes of this type of strategic analysis.
- The incident dataset provides a suitable evidence base, travel time modelling aligns with assumptions used within the mobilisation system, and response time calculations are transparent and consistent with existing operational processes.

- DWFRS has published substantial information describing the methodology and the results of the FCR, supporting transparency and helping stakeholders understand how the analysis has been undertaken.
- The use of five-year dataset represents a reasonable balance between capturing sufficient incident volume for stable analysis, while still reflecting recent operational activity.
- DWFRS has chosen to include data from the COVID-19 period, rather than attempting to exclude specific time periods. This approach is consistent with national guidance and avoids the risk of selectively removing data that may introduce unintended bias.
- A particularly positive feature of the work is the clear understanding demonstrated by the DWFRS analytical team of the model they have developed.
- The work undertaken by DWFRS therefore provides a credible basis for the analysis presented within the Station Reviews.

9.9 Overall, the independent review has provided additional assurance to the Authority regarding the robustness and integrity of the methodology, analytical approach, and supporting data used to inform the Station Review project. The findings of the review support the view that the process undertaken has been evidence-based, proportionate, and subject to appropriate scrutiny, thereby assisting the Authority in reaching an informed and transparent decision.

9.10 The Service's approach to responding appropriately and openly to requests under the Freedom of Information Act throughout the consultation process provides a further example of its commitment to transparency and accountability. Where possible, information requested by stakeholders and members of the public has been disclosed in accordance with statutory requirements, supporting open engagement, informed scrutiny, and public understanding of the proposals and the evidence underpinning them.

9.11 The Service has responded to 40 requests under the Freedom of Information Act since January 2026 that related to the work of the RSP, and specifically proposed station closures. Of these, 28 (70%) were responded to within the statutory timeframes. Exemptions were applied to withhold or partially withhold 17 of the 40 requests (43%). Table 3 below summarises the exemptions used and how frequently they were applied (please note that in some cases, more than one exemption was applied to a single request, so the total number of exemptions exceeds 17):

Exemption	
Information already reasonably accessible (s. 21)	8
Requests where the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit (s.12)	4
Information intended for future publication (s. 22)	3
Personal information (s. 40)	3
National security (s. 24)	2
Law enforcement (s. 31)	2
Prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs (s. 36)	1
Commercial interests (s. 43)	1

Table 3: FOI exemptions applied and frequency

9.12 Furthermore, through the consultation process, concerns were raised regarding the currency of the data sets used within the analysis. In the original reports published on the Service's website, the data period reviewed covered the five-year span 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2024, which is consistent with established good practice in data analysis and trend assessment. This five-year window was selected as it represented the most recent complete dataset available at the time and provided a stable baseline for comparison.

9.13 The use of a consistent dataset was essential to ensure fairness and comparability in the analysis, with all stations assessed against the same time period.

9.14 It also aligned with the commencement of the MWG in November 2024, ensuring that all station-level reviews undertaken between November 2024 and December 2025 were assessed using a consistent and standardised time period.

9.15 Following consultation feedback and the availability of more up-to-date information, the Service has subsequently been able to re-run the analysis using the most recent five-year period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2026, enabling an updated and more current view of demand, activity and performance trends across the Service area. This is available in Appendix J.

9.16 Data covering 1 April 2021 to 31 April 2026 is broadly consistent with that previously presented to the Authority in February 2026, with minor variations due to incident location and low incident volumes where response standards apply. The most notable changes are in Maiden Newton, where the updated data shows a 2 minute 42 second reduction in average first appliance

response time for property fires without sleeping risk, and Cranborne, where there is a 2 minute 17 second increase for the same incident type.

9.17 **Response Times**

9.18 The travel time assumptions used within the Station Review reports and supporting appendices have been an area of discussion and challenge throughout the consultation process. Feedback received through public meetings, survey responses, and stakeholder engagement has highlighted concerns regarding whether the modelling fully reflects real-world conditions, including rural road networks, congestion, seasonal traffic, flooding, roadworks, and wider mobilising factors that may affect emergency response times in practice.

9.19 The model used by the Service constructs response times by combining three components:

- Call handling time.
- Mobilisation time.
- Travel time.

9.20 The modelling used by the Service assumes a call handling time of 1.5 minutes for all incidents, with mobilisation times of two minutes for wholetime stations and five minutes for on-call stations. These assumptions are consistent with the parameters used within the Service's mobilising system and align with the approach of other fire and rescue services.

9.21 As part of the Service's assurance measures, internal validation has been undertaken by comparing modelled travel times against historic attendance times in selected operational incidents. This process has enabled the Service to assess whether the assumptions used within the model are broadly consistent with operational experience and real-world response activity.

9.22 In addition, the model is based on road network data combined with assumed appliance speeds, informed by previous analysis undertaken by Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service. These speeds are applied across different road classifications to estimate expected travel times within the modelling framework.

9.23 Using this information, the Service generated travel time isochrones at 20-second intervals from each station up to 30 minutes. These isochrones were then used to determine the expected travel time between each station and each incident location

9.24 The Service's approach to travel times formed part of the independent assurance review, as highlighted in the above sections, this resulted in the following comment provided within the report (Appendix B):

"*A particularly positive feature of the approach is that the travel time assumptions used in the model are aligned with those used within the mobilisation system. This means that the travel time estimates used for strategic analysis are consistent with the calculations used when mobilising appliances to real incidents*"

9.25 Appendix M, Response Times, provides an actual and modelled response times broken down per season.

9.26 The actual average first appliance response time, includes incidents where a pumping appliance has arrived at the incident scene. Dependant on the appliance availability this is the time the Service resource attended the incident and not necessarily the modelled closest appliance.

9.27 The modelled data, provides an average first appliance response time where each station has been modelled as the closest appliance.

9.28 The actual and modelled response times generally correlate with each other. Differences are to be expected due to a number of reasons, including appliance availability, turn in and call handling times, whether crews were already on station, and local traffic and whether conditions.

9.29 The use of modelling allows these variations to be limited to align all station and incidents across the Service under one methodology, removing as many outside factors as possible.

9.30 **Rurality & Wider System**

9.31 **Geography of Service**

9.32 The Service covers a large and predominantly rural geographical area, encompassing extensive countryside, dispersed communities, market towns, and coastal locations. The rural nature of much of the Service area presents unique operational challenges, including longer travel distances, varying road networks, seasonal population changes, and a reliance on on-call firefighters in many communities. These factors require the Service to balance local accessibility with the efficient deployment of resources to ensure an effective response across both urban and rural areas.

9.33 The data presented within the Station Reviews and supporting appendices includes a substantial range of actual operational statistics, providing an evidence-based assessment of current performance across the Service area. This analysis therefore has been developed with full consideration of the Service's diverse geography and rural characteristics, with the modelled data similarly reflecting the operational realities of serving a large and varied landscape.

9.34 **Thatched Analysis (data period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2026)**

9.35 The Thatch Analysis (Appendix I) has reviewed the number of thatch fire incidents occurring within each station area under review, alongside the total number of thatch fire incidents across the wider Service area. This analysis includes incidents where stations under review have been mobilised as part of the initial emergency response, as well as those where they have attended in a relief or supporting capacity.

9.36 Across the Service area, thatch fire activity during the review period (1 April 2021 to 31 March 2026) demonstrates a clear and consistent concentration of demand outside of the station areas under review. Of the 54 thatch fires recorded, only three occurred within these areas, with no individual station experiencing more than one incident, representing just 5.56% of total thatch fire activity.

9.37 This pattern is further reinforced when considering operational response requirements. The 54 incidents generated 659 pumping appliance mobilisations in total, of which only 38 (5.77%) were attributable to the stations under review.

9.38 Taken together, this evidences that thatch fire risk and operational demand is not evenly distributed across the Service area but is instead predominantly managed by other stations within the wider network. The stations under review therefore make a comparatively limited contribution to thatch fire response activity, both in terms of incident occurrence and resource deployment.

9.39 **Demographics Across the Service Area**

9.40 DWFRS serve a resident population of over 1.5 million people across a diverse geographical area encompassing large urban centres, market towns, coastal communities, and extensive rural areas.

9.41 The Service area includes communities with varying demographic profiles, levels of deprivation, and risk characteristics, alongside seasonal population increases associated with tourism.

9.42 **Elderly Population**

9.43 Dorset, Wiltshire, and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole all have significant older populations, with a higher proportion of residents aged 65 and over than the national average in many areas. All stations reviewed, with the exception of Maiden Newton and Cranborne, have a higher elderly population percentage than their Local Authority area, with Mere substantially higher.

9.44 The Station Reviews and supporting appendices are based on a combination of actual incident data, Service-held risk information, and evidence-led modelling, ensuring that the findings reflect the operational realities of the communities served.

9.45 The Service recognises that older residents can present specific vulnerabilities; however, the presence of an ageing population alone does not determine the requirement for a fire station in a particular location. Rather, station locations and resource deployment must be informed by a balanced assessment of risk, incident demand, response arrangements, and overall operational resilience.

9.46 The Service maintains an active and targeted prevention programme that is focused on those most vulnerable to fire and other emergencies. Taken together, the evidence presented within this report, the wider area profile work, and the Service's ongoing prevention activity provide a robust and proportionate basis for assessing community risk and informing decision-making.

9.47 As part of the Station Review reports and appendices provided to the Authority at their February 2026 meeting, each station under review had a full Area Profile published. This included details of the population by age, as well as the other protected characteristics.

9.48 **Seasonable Variation (data period 1April 2021 to 31 March 2026)**

9.49 The Seasonal Variation analysis (Appendix E) reviewed the impact of the seasons of the year on the stations under review for the following areas:

- Number of incidents.
- Number of mobilisations.
- Average response times as either the first or second appliance response.

9.50 The number of incidents analysis indicates that during the summer months there are low-moderate increases for incident activity within all of the station areas.

9.51 Conversely, there are periods of lower incident activity for Maiden Newton during spring with 16% and Cranborne during autumn with 17% of respective incident activity during these seasons.

9.52 The Season Variation appendix and Response Times appendix (Appendices E and M) both review seasonal impacts as part of the thematic feedback identified during the public consultation period.

9.53 Average response times review all appliance response times into the station area under review, not just that of the station appliance under review. The

response times indicate that each station area is impacted differently, depending on the season, with no single season impacting more than others.

9.54 Actual and modelled response times generally correlate with each other, where there are differences, these are due to a number of factors such as appliance availability, call handling and traffic conditions.

9.55 The general trend for seasonal variation suggests that no substantial seasonal variation is evident over this period.

9.56 **Neighbouring Stations**

9.57 Concerns regarding the ability of neighbouring stations to support communities in the event of a station closure have been considered as part of the station review process.

9.58 The analysis undertaken was not limited to the stations under review but has also assessed the capacity, availability, and operational contribution of surrounding stations.

9.59 This has included consideration of on-call availability, existing demand levels, and the ability of neighbouring resources to respond effectively within the wider Service network.

9.60 The findings presented within the reports and appendices include, where appropriate, assessment of both local and neighbouring station impacts, rather than consideration of individual stations in isolation.

9.61 The Service has a clear understanding of the role and requirement for each station following the completion of our FCR, where an assessment of current and future risk, incident demand, response performance, and operational resilience were considered.

9.62 Where the availability of the stations under review has been low there is already evidence of the operational response to these station areas being covered by neighbouring stations. A full analysis of availability has been provided in Appendix K.

9.63 The 2021-26 Incident Data (Appendix J), together with the Station Review reports and Station Appendices, presented in February 2026, sets out the anticipated impacts on neighbouring stations arising from any station closures. The analysis demonstrates that the highest increase in activity would be experienced by wholetime stations. While three on-call stations are also identified as experiencing comparatively greater impacts, the increase is estimated at approximately two additional incidents per week. Of these three stations, two currently maintain high levels of operational availability across two appliances, while the third has already been identified as an area of focus

for the Service as part of its ongoing work to strengthen operational resilience and availability.

9.64 As part of the wider Modernisation Programme, further work will be undertaken to strengthen operational availability and resilience where it is most needed, ensuring resources continue to be aligned to risk and demand while supporting the long-term sustainability of the Service.

9.65 **Future Risk**

9.66 **Wildfire Analysis (data period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2026)**

9.67 The Wildfire Analysis (Appendix G) examined the number of wildfires using the National Fire Chiefs Council's (NFCC) wildfire criteria that have occurred during the review period in the Service.

9.68 DWFRS reports any incident which meets one or more of the following NFCC Operational Guidance definition of a wildfire:

- Involves a geographical area of at least one hectare (10,000 square metres).
- Requires a committed resource of at least four fire and rescue service appliances/resources.
- Requires resources to be committed for at least six hours.

9.69 The Service responds to other outdoor fires which are not classed as wildfires as do not meet the above definition, these include small grass fires, fire in hedgerows, bonfires, etc.

9.70 During the period of 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2026, there were 397 wildfire incidents across DWFRS. For the eight stations under review, 45 (11.34%) wildfires occurred in total across their respective station areas. Although Hamworthy had the most at 24 (6.04%), Poole fire station was modelled as closest to these and all other stations under review had eight or fewer wildfires each over the five years.

9.71 During the review period, there were 2,100 mobilisations of DWFRS pumping appliances to wildfires in the Service area. The stations under review were mobilised 84 times (4.00%) to the wildfire incidents.

9.72 Small vehicles (L4T), Water Carriers and the Command Support Vehicle from the eight stations under review have also been mobilised but are not included in this analysis, as these special appliances would be moved to another DWFRS location, should the station it is currently located at be closed.

9.73 Of the 6,673 outdoor fires during the review period, 412 (6.17%) occurred within the station areas of the stations under review. Hamworthy had the most outdoor fires with 237 (3.55%) incidents over the five years.

9.74 There were 9,275 pumping appliance mobilisations to outdoor fires, with the stations under review mobilising to 247 (2.66%) of all outdoor fire incidents.

9.75 This indicates that the risk and demand from wildfires and outdoor fires are located elsewhere within the Service area.

9.76 **Flooding Analysis (data period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2026)**

9.77 The Flooding Analysis (Appendix H) has reviewed all flood related incidents that have occurred in the station areas during the review period.

9.78 Of the 446 flood related incidents across our Service area, 36 incidents occurred within the station areas of the stations under review. This is a total of 8.07% of all flooding incidents, across the five-year period.

9.79 Across the five-year period a total of 44 flooding incidents had appliances mobilised from the eight stations under review. This is a total of 5.61% of the 784 Service wide mobilisations to flooding incidents over the five-year period. It is worthing noting that this is the total number of pumping appliances mobilised to incidents across the five-year period and have been recorded regardless of whether crews attended the incident or were stood down before arriving at the incident.

9.80 The levels of flooding incidents and mobilisations for the stations under review is low, indicating that demand is greater in other areas of the Service.

9.81 **Local Plans – Housing Growth**

9.82 Appendix F reviews the latest publicly available local plans, including known housing growth and major infrastructure developments, alongside the most recent Service-held risk information for the station areas under review.

9.83 The review identified one notable housing development at Holes Bay, where at least 830 homes are planned over the next ten years. Given the proximity of wholetime stations to the area, this growth (under 1000 dwellings) is considered low and a tolerable risk for the Service. No other development pressures or growth of this level were identified within the station areas under review.

9.84 Larger known developments across the Service area are not within the first or second response for the stations under review.

9.85 Between 2016 and 2025 there has been an increase of approximately 51,770 (7.78%) domestic properties within the Service area. Over the same period the number of domestic dwelling fires has reduced from 123 to 78 per 100,000 properties per year.

9.86 Modern housing developments generally present a lower fire risk than older housing due to higher building standards, improved electrical safety,

enhanced fire-resisting construction and the installation smoke detection systems. National fire safety evidence demonstrates that early detection significantly reduces the likelihood of fatalities and serious injuries, with homes lacking working smoke alarms being considerably more likely to result in death in the event of a fire. New housing developments are constructed to modern Building Regulations standards, which incorporate significantly enhanced fire safety measures.

9.87 The review of Service-held risk information identified additional risk sites across each station area; however, all risk sites are subject to a planned review process to ensure information remains current and that sites are retained only where a valid operational risk continues to exist.

10. Additional Analysis

10.1 This section provides additional analysis to supplement the report and aid decision making. This will provide a broader understanding of station-level impacts alongside the overall Service position.

10.2 **Availability Analysis (data period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2026)**

10.3 The appliance Availability Analysis reviewed the annual availability of pumping appliances at each of the stations under review across the financial years 2019–2026.

10.4 The analysis considered each station's availability on a standalone basis and, where applicable, has also taken account of periods when stations were supplemented by additional staff through overtime arrangements or detached duties from other stations or departments, referred to within this appendix as "imports".

10.5 The review also included consideration of the availability of any specialist appliances located at the stations under review.

10.6 Appendix K provides a detailed analysis of the availability of all 27 one-pump on-call stations across the Service area.

10.7 A longer review period (2019–2026) has been applied to station availability data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of long-term trends, reducing the impact of short-term fluctuations.

10.8 The analysis shows that station availability varies significantly across the Service, ranging from 95.43% (substantial availability is classed as above 80%) at the highest end to 16.31% at the lowest.

10.9 Fluctuations in annual station availability occur year on year and are influenced by a range of factors, including recruitment and retention levels,

skills and competency requirements, and external employment commitments affecting individual availability.

10.10 The availability of specialist appliances is generally high, reflecting the lower crewing requirements needed to staff these resources compared with standard pumping appliances. For example, light off-road pumping appliances require one crew member, whilst incident command vehicles and water carriers require two crew members.

10.11 Whilst reviewing availability it is important to recognise the significant commitment demonstrated by on-call personnel in maintaining operational cover. This often requires personal and family sacrifices, alongside adjustments to social and work arrangements, in order to support their station and ensure continued service to their local community.

10.12 The Service recognises that there are stations with comparatively lower levels of availability that are not subject to potential station closures; however, these stations are typically those associated with higher levels of operational demand and greater risk profiles. As such, they remain a key focus of the Service's planning assumptions and risk-based decision making. These stations are subject to further detailed reviews as part of the wider Modernisation Programme, ensuring that future arrangements appropriately balance availability, risk, and community need.

10.13 **Impact on Fire Cover (data period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2026)**

10.14 The Impact on Fire Cover (Appendix L) considers the impact on the Service should all eight stations be closed.

10.15 In undertaking this review the Service analysed the following areas, for each stations pumping appliance (fire engine):

- Number of Stations within Service.
- Number of Actual Mobilisations within Service.
- Number of Actual times first or second on scene.

10.16 This enabled a comprehensive assessment of the value and contribution of the eight stations, together with a full understanding of their wider organisational and corporate impact. Full details can be found in Appendix L.

10.17 Should all eight stations close, the total number of fire stations within the Service would reduce from 50 to 42, representing a reduction of 16%. During the revised review period of 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2026, the Service recorded a total of 94,773 mobilisations, of which the eight stations collectively accounted for 2,736 mobilisations, representing 2.89% of overall Service activity.

10.18 Further analysis indicates that of the 65,763 incidents that occurred between 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2026 where one or more pumping appliances were on scene, the eight stations were on scene as the first appliance 1,547 (2.35%) times and for the 12,558 incidents requiring more two or more appliances on scene, the eight stations were second appliance on scene for 438 of those incidents (3.49%).

10.19 This indicates that operational and incident demand is substantially greater within other areas of the Service, with the eight stations accounting for a relatively limited proportion of total Service mobilisations.

10.20 **Scale of Incidents (data period 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2025)**

10.21 The Scale of Incidents (Appendix N) reviews the demand placed upon DWFRS for pumping appliances from incidents within the Service area to identify the frequency and scale of incidents.

10.22 This review analyses how often incidents require one or more pumping appliances, how many incidents occur per hour, how often this occurs and how long pumping appliances are committed to an incident.

10.23 This analysis enables a comprehensive understanding of the demands of incidents and the resilience of the Service to maintain an effective emergency response during times of incidents.

10.24 **Incident Appliance Requirement Profile**

10.25 During this review period, the maximum number of pumping appliances committed to incidents was 41 pumping appliances for one hour out of the 26,304 hours reviewed.

10.26 For 94.46% of the 26,304 hours reviewed, ten or fewer pumping appliances were committed to incidents at any one time.

10.27 **Concurrent Demand Analysis**

10.28 During the review period, the maximum number of incidents to occur in a single hour was 15 incidents. This occurred for one hour out of the 26,304 hours reviewed.

10.29 For 39.58% of the reviewed hours, no incidents occurred. 94.00% of this time saw five or fewer incidents occurring and 99.86% of the time there were ten or fewer incidents occurring within an hour.

10.30 **Analysis of 10+ Appliance Incidents**

10.31 This reviewed the total number of pumping appliances that arrived on scene at each DWFRS incident during 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2026.

10.32 During the review period, 77.21% of incidents required only a single pumping appliance and 89.87% required one or two pumping appliances only.

10.33 There were 120 incidents requiring more than ten pumping appliances, with 93 of these incidents requiring ten to 19 pumping appliances.

10.34 **Incident Duration Analysis**

10.35 This reviewed the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2026 to assess the length of time pumping appliances are committed to incidents. The longest time a pumping appliance was committed to an incident was between 48 and 72 hours on one occasion only.

10.36 During the review period, pumping appliances were committed to an incident for less than one hour for 72.31% of the time, less than three hours for 95.55% of the time and between three to ten hours for 4.31% of the time.

10.37 **Extreme Demand Scenario Analysis**

10.38 During the period 1 Jan 2023 to 31 Dec 2025, the most pumping appliances required was 41 pumping appliances for one hour.

10.39 41 pumping appliances represents 59.42% of DWFRS total pumping appliances based on 69 pumping appliances within DWFRS. In the event of the closure of eight stations, reducing from 69 to 61 pumping appliances within DWFRS, 41 pumping appliances would represent 67.21% of total pumping appliance capability within the Service.

10.40 It is important to note that not all 69 pumping appliances were available at the time of needing 41 pumping appliances.

10.41 Even if all eight stations were to be closed this would still leave the Service a contingency of 20 appliances over the largest demand seen over the previous five years.

10.42 **Legislation**

10.43 Fire and Rescue Services operate within a broad and complex legislative framework that extends significantly beyond their core emergency response functions. In addition to the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and related fire-specific legislation, Services must comply with a wide range of statutory duties covering employment law, equality and diversity, health and safety, environmental protection, safeguarding, information management and counter-terrorism responsibilities, including the Prevent duty.

10.44 This includes compliance with extensive health and safety legislation, such as the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, alongside specialist requirements relating to the management of the built estate and operational infrastructure, including legionella control, asbestos management,

construction and building safety regulations, and environmental legislation. Fleet and workshop functions must also operate within strict regulatory standards governing vehicle maintenance, fuel safety, and workshop compliance.

10.45 In addition, Services must meet obligations under employment and workforce legislation, ensuring fair and lawful treatment of staff, alongside safeguarding duties to protect children and vulnerable adults.

10.46 Taken together, these requirements demonstrate the breadth and complexity of the statutory environment in which fire and rescue services operate, requiring dedicated specialist officers and professional expertise across a wide range of disciplines, not solely operational fire and rescue personnel.

10.47 The Service maintains a comprehensive understanding of its legislative responsibilities through an annual assessment process as part of the Statement of Assurance. This ensures that all relevant statutory requirements are regularly reviewed, updated, and embedded across the organisation. The approach provides assurance that the Service remains compliant with current legislation and aware of emerging legislation, while also supporting continuous monitoring of how these requirements are applied and managed across all areas of activity.

10.48 This annual review process is also closely aligned with the Service's wider annual review of corporate teams. This integrated approach supports continuous improvement and helps ensure that the Service remains efficient, effective, and deliver value for money in the delivery of its statutory duties and wider responsibilities.

10.49 **Corporate Staffing Levels**

10.50 In the course of consultation, the level of corporate and support staffing within the Service has been raised. Appendix D has considered concerns raised by undertaking a standardised comparison against a range of comparable fire and rescue services and reviewing workforce ratios alongside wider evidence of organisational effectiveness.

10.51 The analysis demonstrates that the Service sits within a reasonable and defensible range for a standalone, rural Combined Fire Authority and does not indicate an unusually high or disproportionate level of corporate staffing when viewed in context.

10.52 While some services report higher operational-to-corporate staffing ratios, these differences are frequently influenced by governance arrangements, outsourced or shared-service delivery models, and the extent to which corporate capability is provided internally or accessed externally.

10.53 Importantly, the evidence suggests that the Service's staffing model is supporting effective organisational delivery, statutory responsibilities and operational resilience, reflected through positive HMICFRS efficiency assessments, internal assurance arrangements and recognised external accreditations. Taken together, the position set out in the appendix supports the conclusion that corporate staffing levels within DWFRS are proportionate to the Service's governance model, operating environment and organisational responsibilities, and do not provide evidence of excess capacity when compared appropriately.

10.54 As highlighted in section 1.18, the Service has made £2.3m of permanent revenue savings across our corporate teams, over the past ten years. Furthermore, as outlined in section 1.16 of this paper, the Service undertakes an annual review of corporate team structures. These reviews ensure that corporate functions remain proportionate, sustainable and aligned to Service need. This approach is well established and will continue as part of ongoing organisational planning.

10.55 **Availability Modelling by Staffing Levels (data period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026)**

10.56 Availability modelling by staffing levels (Appendix O) reviews the availability levels of stations against four or more, three or more, two or more staff to identify availability levels of stations to support alternative operational delivery models.

10.57 The number and type of incidents that occur within each station area under review is further analysed to understand the demand requirements of these stations.

10.58 Reducing the crewing levels to enable a station to be available with less than four available crew members positively impacts the availability of each station under review by varying amounts, with Cranborne seeing a more than double improvement in their availability when dropping to three available personnel and availability more than tripling when dropping from four to two available personnel.

10.59 The majority of incident types that occur in the station areas under review are automatic fire alarms, fires in the open small, false alarm good intent calls and persons collapsed gain entry/access in support of the Ambulance Service.

10.60 This indicates that there is opportunity for the Service to modernise the operational delivery models at the stations under review.

11. Stations for Potential Closure

11.1 This next section provides an overview of each of the eight fire stations being reviewed for potential closure, following the Station Review process, with key information to support informed decision-making by the Authority.

11.2 The information contained within the appendices to this report have been summarised and referenced within the individual station sections below. This is to ensure that key findings, supporting data, and contextual information can be clearly understood alongside each specific station.

11.3 In addition, this section highlights the key local themes raised through the consultation process, as summarised in Table 2, to provide context to the issues and considerations specific to each station area.

11.4 Annex 1. found at the bottom of this report, provides an assessment of the key risk, demand and community impact factors considered as part of the review, including the application of low, moderate and substantial ratings where appropriate.

11.5 **Bradford on Avon – Station Summary**

Station Summary – Bradford on Avon		
Appliances at Station	1 pumping appliance	
Number of on-call firefighters on station	10	
Current Availability (2025/2026)	53.55%	
Average Availability (over seven years)	47.13%	
	Five Year Total	**One Year Average**
Number of modelled incidents as first pump	572	114
Number of modelled incidents as second pump	114	23
Total number of modelled incidents	686	137
	Five Year Total	**One Year Average**
Number of times pump on scene at DWFRS incidents	446	89
Number of mobilisations of pump to DWFRS incidents	516	103
	Actual	
Response time for nearest neighbouring DWFRS station	8 minutes	
Station Position		
Seasonal Variation	Low increase in incidents during winter and summer	
Local Plans – Housing Growth	Low growth identified for station area	
Wildfire Analysis	Low incidents and risk	
Flood Analysis	Low incidents and risk	

Thatch Analysis	Low incidents and risk
Elderly Population	Moderate
Site-Specific Risk Information (Level 3 and above)	Low
Availability Modelling by Staffing Levels	Low (almost moderate 19.03% increase) availability improvement however would increase to moderate availability levels
Station Site	
Site owned by Service Rights of way were highlighted but no issues identified Legacy covenants that are no longer applicable No identified issues or concerns Asset Valuation (2026) £356k	

Table 4: Bradford on Avon station summary

Local Consultation Concerns		
Concern	**Position**	**Evidence/Assurance**
Flooding/waters/rivers	There were five flooding incidents in the Bradford on Avon station area during the review period. There are 25 flood risk sites within the Bradford on Avon station area. In 2025-26, Bradford on Avon was unavailable for incidents 46.45% of the time, this means over half of the time the community already receives the increased response time.	Station Review report and Station Appendix (Feb 26) Appendix K - Availability Analysis Appendix H - Flooding Analysis
Rurality/remoteness	In 2025-26, Bradford on Avon was unavailable for incidents 46.45% of the time, this means that for over half the time, the community already receives the increased response time. Due to the rurality of the station area, on average, if the fire engine was available for all property fire with sleeping risks fires, the average response time for these incidents exceeds the Service target for 31.25% of the time. Bradford on Avon is modelled closest to approximately two incidents per week.	Station Review report and Station Appendix (Feb 26) Appendix M - Response Times

	The station is in close proximity to a neighbouring day crewed fire station. Average response times for incidents in Bradford on Avon's station area are quicker than for most of the other stations under review.	
Traffic/congestion/narrow roads	As rurality/remoteness position.	Appendix K - Availability Analysis Appendix M - Response Times
New/proposed housing	Growth is expected to be modest with minimal impact on Fire Service.	Station Review report and Station Appendix (Feb 26) Appendix F - Local Plans - Housing Growth
Elderly/vulnerable population	29.37% of the Bradford on Avon population are aged 65 years or over. Prevention activities continue to prioritise those in the community who are most at risk of a fire in their home. A large, elderly population presents issues for recruitment of firefighters due to a small amount of eligible people for recruitment within the community.	Station Review report and Station Appendix (Feb 26)
Thatched/heritage	Bradford on Avon provides the nearest pump to 57 heritage properties and three thatch properties.	Appendix I - Thatch Analysis
Tourism	During the review period, 27% of all incidents within the Bradford on Avon station area occur in Summer.	Appendix E - Seasonal Variations

Table 5: Consultation response and assurance

Bradford on Avon Fire Station		
Annual Capital Savings	**Annual Revenue Savings**	**One-off Redundancy Costs**
£31,239	£246,931	£19,376

Table 6: Summary of indicative information of the possible savings should the decision be made to close Bradford on Avon Fire Station. Please see the decision paper for further information

11.6 Following completion of the consultation process and further review of the information set out in the appendices to this report, no fundamental changes

have been identified that require further consideration by the Authority in relation to the proposals for Bradford on Avon Fire Station.

11.7 The analysis has identified that:

- Low demand
- Low-Moderate fluctuating historic availability
- Low current availability
- Recruitment and retention issues
- Low community risk
- No fundamental changes from consultation for consideration
- Annual Revenue Saving of £246,931

11.8 **Charmouth Fire Station – Station Summary**

Station Summary - Charmouth		
Appliances at Station	1 pumping appliance	
Number of on-call firefighters on station	11	
Current Availability (2025/2026)	79.78%	
Average Availability (over seven years)	80.50%	
	Five Year Total	**One Year Average**
Number of modelled incidents as first pump	216	43
Number of modelled incidents as second pump	305	61
Total number of modelled incidents	521	104
	Five Year Total	**One Year Average**
Number of times pump on scene at DWFRS incidents	259	52
Number of mobilisations of pump to DWFRS incidents	301	60
	Actual	
Response time for nearest neighbouring DWFRS station	11 minutes	
Station Position		
Seasonal Variation	Low increase in incidents during summer	
Local Plans – Housing Growth	Low growth identified for the station area	
Wildfire Analysis	Low incidents and risk	
Flood Analysis	Low Incidents and risk	
Thatch Analysis	Low Incidents and risk	
Elderly Population	Moderate	
Site-Specific Risk Information (Level 3 and above)	Low	
Availability Modelling by Staffing Levels	Low availability improvement (due to already moderate/substantial levels of availability)	
Station Site		

Site owned by Service No covenants No identified issues or concerns Asset Valuation (2026) £307k

Table 7: Charmouth station summary

Local Consultation Concerns		
Concern	**Position**	**Evidence/Assurance**
Tourism	Low impact identified.	Appendix E - Seasonal Variations
Rurality/remoteness	Charmouth fire appliance was available 79.78% of the time (2025-26). The nearest fire appliance is from Lyme Regis an 11-minute drive time.	Appendix K - Availability Analysis
Traffic/congestion/narrow roads	The average second appliance response time increases by 46 seconds during summer months compared to the average second appliance response time across all seasons during the review period.	Appendix E - Seasonal Variations
Proximity to major roads	Modelled closest to 20 RTC incidents over five years (average four per year).	Appendix J - 2021-26 Incident Data
New/proposed housing	Low levels of proposed housing identified in Charmouth's station area.	Appendix F - Local Plans - Housing Growth

Table 8: Consultation response and assurance

Charmouth Fire Station		
Annual Capital Savings	**Annual Revenue Savings**	**One-off Redundancy Costs**
£29,239	£204,216	£39,319

Table 9: Summary of indicative information of the possible savings should the decision be made to close Charmouth Fire Station. Please see the decision paper for further information

11.9 Following completion of the consultation process and further review of the information set out in the appendices to this report, no fundamental changes have been identified that require further consideration by the Authority in relation to the proposals for Charmouth Fire Station.

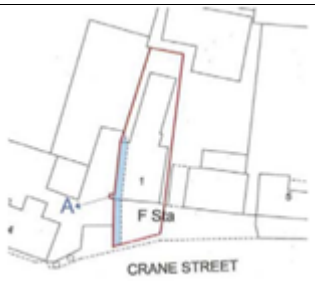
11.10 This analysis has identified that the station has:

- Low demand
- Moderate-Substantial fluctuating historic availability
- Moderate (almost substantial) current availability
- Low community risk

- No fundamental changes from consultation for consideration
- Annual Revenue Saving of £204,216

11.11 **Cranborne Fire Station – Station Summary**

Station Summary - Cranborne		
Appliances at Station	1 pumping appliance and 1 light off-road pumping appliance	
Number of on-call firefighters on station	7	
Current Availability (2025/2026)	22.29%	
Average Availability (over seven years)	53.90%	
	Five Year Total	**One Year Average**
Number of modelled incidents as first pump	191	38
Number of modelled incidents as second pump	337	67
Total number of modelled incidents	528	105
	Five Year Total	**One Year Average**
Number of times pump on scene at DWFRS incidents	110	22
Number of mobilisations of pump to DWFRS incidents	126	25
	Actual	
Response time for nearest neighbouring DWFRS station	8 minutes	
Station Position		
Seasonal Variation	Moderate increase in incidents in Summer	
Local Plans – Housing Growth	Low growth identified for the station area	
Wildfire Analysis	Low incidents and risk	
Flood Analysis	Low incidents and risk	
Thatch Analysis	Low incidents and risk	
Elderly Population	Low	
Site-Specific Risk Information (Level 3 and above)	Low	
Availability Modelling by Staffing Levels	Substantial availability improvement (increase to 81.44%)	
Station Sites		
Site owned by Service Very small section of land to the side of the site (highlighted on plans with a blue strip) with a restrictive use covenant that could be returned		



No covenant on overall site
No identified issues or concerns
Asset Valuation (2026) £121k

Table 10: Cranborne station summary

Local Consultation Concerns		
Concern	**Position**	**Evidence/Assurance**
Rurality/remoteness	In 2025-26, Cranborne was unavailable for incidents 77.71% of the time, this means that for a large period of time, the community already receives the increased response time. Due to the rurality of the station area, on average, if the fire engine was available for all property fire with sleeping risks fires, the average response time for these incidents exceeds the Service target for 59.37% of the time. Low number of incidents where Cranborne would be the closest fire engine.	Station Review report and Station Appendix (Feb 26) Appendix K - Availability Analysis Appendix M - Response Times
New/proposed housing	Low growth identified.	Appendix F - Local Plans - Housing Growth
Climate change/wildfire	During the review period, there were six wildfire incidents within the Cranborne station area out of 397 across the Service area. There were no flooding incidents in the station area during the review period.	Appendix G - Wildfire Analysis Appendix H - Flooding Analysis
Traffic congestion/narrow roads	In 2025-26, Cranborne was unavailable for incidents 77.71% of the time, this means that for a large period of time, the community already receives the increased	Station Review report and Station Appendix (Feb 26) Appendix K - Availability Analysis Appendix M - Response Times

	response time from neighbouring stations responding into the Cranborne area. Low number of incidents where Cranborne would be the closest fire engine to an incident.	

Table 11: Consultation response and assurance

Cranborne Fire Station		
Annual Capital Savings	**Annual Revenue Savings**	**One-off Redundancy Costs**
£31,239	£142,776	£16,950

Table 12: Summary of indicative information of the possible savings should the decision be made to close Cranborne Fire Station. Please see the decision paper for further information

11.12 Following completion of the consultation process and further review of the information set out in the appendices to this report, no fundamental changes have been identified that require further consideration by the Authority in relation to the proposals for Cranborne Fire Station.

11.13 This analysis has identified that the station has:

- Low demand
- Steady decline from Substantial-Low historic availability
- Low current availability
- Recruitment and retention issues
- Low community risk
- No fundamental changes from consultation for consideration
- Annual Revenue Saving of £142,776

11.14 **Hamworthy Fire Station – Station Summary**

Station Summary - Hamworthy		
Appliances at Station	1 pumping appliance, 1 light off-road pumping appliance and 1 incident command vehicle	
Number of on-call firefighters on station	13	
Current Availability (2025/2026)	71.80%	
Average Availability (over seven years)	73.80%	
	Five Year Total	**One Year Average**
Number of modelled incidents as first pump	286	57
Number of modelled incidents as second pump	474	95
Total number of modelled incidents	760	152

	Five Year Total	One Year Average
Number of times pump on scene at DWFRS incidents	537	107
Number of mobilisations of pump to DWFRS incidents	611	122
	Actual	
Response time for nearest neighbouring DWFRS station	6 minutes	
Station Position		
Seasonal Variation	Low (almost moderate) increase in incidents during Summer (30% of station incidents in Summer months)	
Local Plans – Housing Growth	Low growth identified for the station area (Holes Bay under 1000 dwellings)	
Wildfire Analysis	Moderate incidents and low risk	
Flood Analysis	Low incidents and risk	
Thatch Analysis	Low incidents and risk	
Elderly Population	Low	
Site-Specific Risk Information (Level 3 and above)	Moderate	
Availability Modelling by Staffing Levels	Low (almost moderate) availability improvement (due to already moderate/substantial levels of availability)	
Station Site		
Site owned by Service Covenant restricting how the site could be used (type and number of houses detailed) No identified issues or concerns Asset Valuation (2026) £835k		

Table 13: Hamworthy station summary

Local Consultation Concerns		
Concern	**Position**	**Evidence/Assurance**
Tourism	During the review period, 30% of all incidents within the Hamworthy station area occur in Summer. Average response times for Hamworthy over five years based on individual seasons indicate that the summer response times are quicker than winter and spring.	Appendix E - Seasonal Variations
Unique geography/bridge access	Hamworthy fire station is in close proximity to a wholetime station who can access Hamworthy using one of the two bridges or via the A35 depending on the incident location.	Station Review report and Station Appendix (Feb 26) Appendix K - Availability Analysis Appendix M - Response times

	Poole's old lifting bridge had its annual five-day routine closure, and resurfacing was completed on May 1, 2026. The newer bridge has recently had routine safety checks and is fully operational. As an example, a wholetime response from Poole fire station travelling via the Twin Sails Bridge or Poole Harbour Lifting Bridge provides the quicker response to Hamworthy Library (approximately 5 minutes 40 seconds) than crews from Hamworthy fire station. Travelling via the A35 to the library would see a response from Poole of 9 minutes, which is slower than the Hamworthy response of 7 minutes 4 seconds. In 2025-26, Hamworthy was available for incidents 71.80% of the time. This means that for the remaining time, another station is responding to incidents in Hamworthy.	
Traffic/congestion/narrow roads	As unique geography/bridge access position. There is a neighbouring wholetime appliance. Modelled vs actual response time are consistent.	Station Review report and Station Appendix (Feb 26) Appendix M - Response times
New/proposed housing	A large development of houses (approx. 830) known as the Holes Bay project has been identified with completion earmarked for the late 2030's. This development sits in close proximity to a neighbouring station area. Prevention activities will continue to prioritise those most at risk from a fire in their home.	Appendix F - Local Plans - Housing Growth

Climate change/wildfires	There were 24 wildfire incidents in the Hamworthy station area during the review period. There are two wildfire risk sites where Hamworthy would provide the nearest fire engine. There were 11 flooding incidents in the Hamworthy area during the review period. There are six flooding risk sites within the Hamworthy station area.	Station Review report and Station Appendix (Feb 26) Appendix G - Wildfire Analysis Appendix H - Flooding Analysis
Local industry/port	There are no identified COMAH sites where Hamworthy would provide the nearest fire engine. Hazard and risk information is captured internally within DWFRS using approved systems.	Station Review report and Station Appendix (Feb 26)

Table 14: Consultation response and assurance

Hamworthy Fire Station		
Annual Capital Savings	**Annual Revenue Savings**	**One-off Redundancy Costs**
£40,880	£232,829	£39,965

Table 15: Summary of indicative information of the possible savings should the decision be made to close Hamworthy Fire Station. Please see the decision paper for further information

11.15 Following completion of the consultation process and further review of the information set out in the appendices to this report, no fundamental changes have been identified that require further consideration by the Authority in relation to the proposals for Hamworthy Fire Station.

11.16 This analysis has identified that the station has:

- Low demand
- Moderate-Substantial fluctuating historic availability
- Moderate current availability
- Wholetime station in close proximity
- Low community risk
- No fundamental changes from consultation for consideration
- Annual Revenue Saving of £232,829

11.17 Maiden Newton Fire Station – Station Summary

Station Summary – Maiden Newton		
Appliances at Station	1 pumping appliance and 1 light off-road pumping appliance	
Number of on-call firefighters on station	7	
Current Availability (2025/2026)	50.02%	
Average Availability (over seven years)	37.28%	
	Five Year Total	**One Year Average**
Number of modelled incidents as first pump	232	46
Number of modelled incidents as second pump	86	17
Total number of modelled incidents	318	64
	Five Year Total	**One Year Average**
Number of times pump on scene at DWFRS incidents	147	29
Number of mobilisations of pump to DWFRS incidents	162	32
	Actual	
Response time for nearest neighbouring DWFRS station	15 minutes	
Station Position		
Seasonal Variation	Moderate increase in incidents Summer and Autumn	
Local Plans – Housing Growth	Low growth identified for station area	
Wildfire Analysis	Low incidents and risk	
Flood Analysis	Low incidents and risk	
Thatch Analysis	Low incidents and Low risk (almost moderate)	
Elderly Population	Low	
Site-Specific Risk Information (Level 3 and above)	Low	
Availability Modelling by Staffing Levels	Low availability improvement (although would move to moderate level of availability)	
Station Site		
Site owned by Service Covenant on side of property for access No identified issues or concerns Asset Valuation (2026) £249k		

Table 16: Maiden Newton station summary

Local Consultation Concerns		
Concern	**Position**	**Evidence/Assurance**
Rurality/remoteness	In 2025-26, Maiden Newton was unavailable for incidents 49.98% of the time, this means that for half of the time, the community already	Station Review report and Station Appendix (Feb 26) Appendix K - Availability Analysis Appendix M - Response Times

	receives the increased response time. The average availability of Maiden Newton between 2019-26 was 37.27% per year. This means that for significant periods of time, the station area already receives an increased response time for an incident. Due to the rurality of the station area, on average, if the fire engine was available for all property fire with sleeping risks fires, the average response time for these incidents exceeds the Service target for 81.82% of the time. Low number of incidents where Maiden Newton would be the closest fire engine.	
Tourism	No significant impact identified.	Appendix E - Seasonal Variations
Flooding/water/rivers	There were five flooding incidents during the review period in the Maiden Newton station area.	Appendix H - Flooding Analysis
Traffic/congestion/narrow roads	As per rurality/remoteness position above. Actual response times provided aligned to the current position of station availability and support from neighbouring stations. Modelled closest to 33 RTC incidents over five years (average seven per year)	Appendix M - Response times Appendix K - Availability Analysis Appendix J - 2021-26 Incident Data
Thatched/heritage properties	One thatch fire occurred during the review period in the Maiden Newton station area. There were 54 thatch fires across the Service during the review period. There are 189 thatched properties where Maiden Newton would provide the nearest fire engine. Of these, only 19 would receive a ten-	Appendix I - Thatch Analysis

	minute response from Maiden Newton. The Service will continue to prioritise prevention activities for thatch properties.	
Climate change/wildfire	There has been one wildfire in the Maiden Newton area during the review period.	Appendix G - Wildfire Analysis
Proximity to major roads	Maiden Newton was modelled closest fire engine for 33 road traffic collisions, and second closest to 14. Maiden Newton actually attended 13 of the 47 incidents.	Appendix J - 2021-26 Incident Data
Further housing growth	No significant growth identified.	Appendix F - Local Plans - Housing Growth

Table 17: Consultation response and assurance

Maiden Newton Fire Station		
Annual Capital Savings	**Annual Revenue Savings**	**One-off Redundancy Costs**
£32,236	£143,608	£34,290

Table 18: Summary of indicative information of the possible savings should the decision be made to close Maiden Newton Fire Station. Please see the decision paper for further information

11.18 Following completion of the consultation process and further review of the information set out in the appendices to this report, no fundamental changes have been identified that require further consideration by the Authority in relation to the proposals for Maiden Newton Fire Station.

11.19 This analysis has identified that the station has:

- Low demand
- Low historic availability
- Low current availability (but highest since 2019)
- Recruitment and retention issues
- Low community risk
- No fundamental changes from consultation for consideration
- Annual Revenue Saving of £143,608

11.20 **Mere Fire Station – Station Summary**

Station Summary - Mere		
Appliances at Station	1 pumping appliance	
Number of on-call firefighters on station	7	
Current Availability (2025/2026)	34.99%	
Average Availability (over seven years)	54.26%	
	Five Year Total	**One Year Average**
Number of modelled incidents as first pump	332	66
Number of modelled incidents as second pump	244	49
Total number of modelled incidents	576	115
	Five Year Total	**One Year Average**
Number of times pump on scene at DWFRS incidents	296	59
Number of mobilisations of pump to DWFRS incidents	318	64
	Actual	
Response time for nearest neighbouring DWFRS station	8 minutes	
Station Position		
Seasonal Variation	Low increase in incidents	
Local Plans – Housing Growth	Low growth identified for the station area	
Wildfire Analysis	Low incidents and risk	
Flood Analysis	Low incidents and risk	
Thatch Analysis	Low incidents and risk	
Elderly Population	Substantial	
Site-Specific Risk Information (Level 3 and above)	Low	
Availability Modelling by Staffing Levels	Low availability improvement, however, would increase to moderate availability levels	
Station Site		
Site owned by Service No identified issues or concerns Asset Valuation (2026) £932k		

Table 19: Mere station summary

Local Consultation Concerns		
Concern	**Position**	**Evidence/Assurance**
Rurality/remoteness	In 2025-26, Mere was unavailable for incidents 65.01% of the time, this means that for a significant period of time, the community already receives the increased response time.	Station Review report and Station Appendix (Feb 26) Appendix K - Availability Analysis Appendix M - Response Times

	Due to the rurality of the station area, on average, if the fire engine was available for all property fire with sleeping risks fires, the average response time for these incidents exceeds the Service target for 48.28% of the time. Low number of incidents where Mere would be the closest fire engine.	
Proximity to major roads	There we 71 road traffic collisions where Mere fire station would have provided the nearest fire engine during the review period. Between 2019 – 26, Mere were available on average for 54.25% of the time, meaning that for a significant period of time, another fire station was responding to incidents on Mere fire stations area.	Station Review report and Station Appendix (Feb 26) Appendix J - 2021-26 Incident Data
New/proposed housing	No significant impact identified.	Appendix F - Local Plans - Housing Growth
Traffic/congestion/narrow roads	As above for rurality/remoteness and Proximity to major roads.	Station Review report and Station Appendix (Feb 26) Appendix J - 2021-26 Incident Data Appendix K - Availability Analysis Appendix M - Response Times
Tourism	Average response times for Mere over five years based on individual season indicate that the summer response times are quicker than winter and spring.	Appendix E - Seasonal Variations

Table 20: Consultation response and assurance

Mere Fire Station		
Annual Capital Savings	**Annual Revenue Savings**	**One-off Redundancy Costs**
£31,239	£180,670	£37,796

Table 21: Summary of indicative information of the possible savings should the decision be made to close Mere Fire Station. Please see the decision paper for further information

11.21 Following completion of the consultation process and further review of the information set out in the appendices to this report, no fundamental changes

have been identified that require further consideration by the Authority in relation to the proposals for Mere Fire Station.

11.22 This analysis has identified that the station has:

- Low demand
- Low-Moderate fluctuating historic availability
- Low current availability
- Recruitment and retention issues
- Low community risk
- No fundamental changes from consultation for consideration
- Annual Revenue Saving of £180,670

11.23 **Ramsbury Fire Station – Station Summary**

Station Summary - Ramsbury		
Appliances at Station	1 pumping appliance	
Number of on-call firefighters on station	6	
Current Availability (2025/2026)	31.50%	
Average Availability (over seven years)	35.80%	
	Five Year Total	**One Year Average**
Number of modelled incidents as first pump	139	28
Number of modelled incidents as second pump	81	16
Total number of modelled incidents	220	44
	Five Year Total	**One Year Average**
Number of times pump on scene at DWFRS incidents	44	9
Number of mobilisations of pump to DWFRS incidents	46	9
	Actual	
Response time for nearest neighbouring DWFRS station	13 minutes	
Station Position		
Seasonal Variation	Moderate increase in incidents in Summer (31% of incidents during the summer months)	
Local Plans – Housing Growth	Low growth identified for station area	
Wildfire Analysis	Low incidents and risk	
Flood Analysis	Low incidents and risk	
Thatch Analysis	Low incidents and risk	
Elderly Population	Moderate	
Site-Specific Risk Information (Level 3 and above)	Low	

Availability Modelling by Staffing Levels	Low improvement in availability
Station Site	
Site owned by Service Legacy covenant for access No identified issues or concerns Asset Valuation (2026) £269k	

Table 22: Ramsbury station summary

Local Consultation Concerns		
Concern	**Position**	**Evidence/Assurance**
Rurality/remoteness	In 2025-26, Ramsbury was unavailable for incidents 68.50% of the time, this means that for a significant period of time, the community already receives the increased response time. Due to the rurality of the station area, on average, if the fire engine was available for all property fire with sleeping risks fires, the average response time for these incidents exceeds the Service target for 75% of the time. Low number of incidents where Ramsbury would be the closest or second closest fire engine.	Station Review report and Station Appendix (Feb 26) Appendix K - Availability Analysis Appendix M - Response Times
Traffic/congestion/narrow roads	As above	As above
Thatched/heritage properties	There are a number of thatched properties where Ramsbury would provide the first pumping appliance in the event of a fire. There have been no thatch fires within the last five years in the station area. The Service will continue to prioritise prevention activities for thatch properties. Operational risk site information is assessed by the Service, with two	Appendix I - Thatch Analysis Appendix F - Local Plans – Housing Growth

	buildings graded as medium risk within the Ramsbury area.	
Elderly/vulnerable population	26.98% of the Ramsbury population are aged 65 years or over. A large, elderly population presents issues for recruitment of firefighters due to a small amount of eligible people for recruitment within the community. The Service will continue to provide prevention activities such as home fire safety checks to qualifying persons to ensure they are fire safe in their home.	Station Review report and Station Appendix (Feb 26)
New/proposed housing	No significant housing growth identified for Ramsbury station area.	Appendix F - Local Plans – Housing Growth
Proximity to major roads	Ramsbury was modelled closest fire engine for nine road traffic collisions, and second closest to eight. Ramsbury attended three of these 17 incidents. None of these incidents occurred on the M4.	Station Review report and Station Appendix (Feb 26)

Table 23: Consultation response and assurance

Ramsbury Fire Station Possible Savings		
Annual Capital Savings	**Annual Revenue Savings**	**One-off Redundancy Costs**
£30,313	£135,042	£18,665

Table 24: Summary indicative information of the possible savings should the decision be made to close Ramsbury Fire Station. Please see the decision paper for further information

11.24 Following completion of the consultation process and further review of the information set out in the appendices to this report, no fundamental changes have been identified that require further consideration by the Authority in relation to the proposals for Ramsbury Fire Station.

11.25 This analysis has identified that the station has:

- Low demand
- Low-Moderate historic availability (Low except 2020/21 when moderate)
- Low current availability
- Low community risk
- Good availability at neighbouring stations

- No fundamental changes from consultation for consideration
- Annual Revenue Saving of £135,042

11.26 **Wilton Fire Station – Station Summary**

Station Summary - Wilton		
Appliances at Station	1 pumping appliance and 1 water carrier	
Number of on-call firefighters on station	13	
Current Availability (2025/2026)	66.68%	
Average Availability (over seven years)	65.47%	
	Five Year Total	**One Year Average**
Number of modelled incidents as first pump	68	14
Number of modelled incidents as second pump	334	67
Total number of modelled incidents	402	80
	Five Year Total	**One Year Average**
Number of times pump on scene at DWFRS incidents	563	113
Number of mobilisations of pump to DWFRS incidents	656	131
	Actual	
Response time for nearest neighbouring DWFRS station	7 minutes	
Station Position		
Seasonal Variation	Moderate increase in incidents during summer period (35% of incidents in summer months)	
Local Plans – Housing Growth	Low growth identified for the station area	
Wildfire Analysis	Low incidents and risk	
Flood Analysis	Low incidents and risk	
Thatch Analysis	Low incidents and risk	
Elderly Population	Moderate	
Site-Specific Risk Information (Level 3 and above)	Low	
Availability Modelling by Staffing Levels	Almost moderate improvement in availability (increasing availability to substantial level)	
Station Site		
Site owned by Service No identified issues or concerns Asset Valuation (2026) £473k		

Table 25: Wilton station summary

Local Consultation Concerns		
Concern	**Position**	**Evidence/Assurance**
Rurality/remoteness	Wilton fire station shares a large part of its station area boundaries	Station Review report and Station Appendix (Feb 26)

	with Salisbury (wholetime and on-call) and Amesbury (day duty and on-call). First appliance response times are stable across the seasons; second appliance response times are 1 minute 6 seconds longer than the average second appliance response time across all seasons during the review period. On average, if the fire engine was available for all property fire with sleeping risks fires, the average response time for these incidents exceeds the Service target for 84.62% of the time. Low number of incidents where Wilton would be the closest fire engine.	Appendix K - Availability Analysis Appendix M - Response Times
New/proposed housing	Low growth identified for Wilton. Salisbury area is noted as having a large estimated dwelling increase between 2026-2038. Duty system changes have taken place at Amesbury Fire station to now have a wholetime immediate response on station every day between 07:30-19:30 to align to increased risk in the area.	Appendix F - Local Plans - Housing Growth
Thatched/heritage	Wilton provides the nearest pump to 26 heritage properties and 30 thatch properties. There was one thatch fire in Wiltons station area over the five-year period.	Station Review report and Station Appendix (Feb 26)
Traffic/congestion/narrow roads	There is low incident demand in Wilton requiring Wilton fire station to respond as the nearest fire engine to an incident. During 2025-26, Wilton was available for 66.68% of the time, meaning that for a moderate	Station Review report and Station Appendix (Feb 26) Appendix K - Availability Analysis Appendix M - Response Times

	amount of time, a neighbouring fire station had to respond to the low number of incidents in Wilton station area. There is higher demand for Wilton to respond as the second fire engine to a neighbouring area. Average response time for the first fire engine to attend an incident in Wilton when responding from Salisbury fire station is an additional eight seconds.	
Flooding/water/rivers	There were four flooding incidents in the station area during the review. There are 19 flood risk sites in the station area.	Appendix H - Flooding Analysis

Table 26: Consultation response and assurance

Wilton Fire Station		
Annual Capital Savings	**Annual Revenue Savings**	**One-off Redundancy Costs**
£31,239	£202,525	£27,707

Table 27: Summary of indicative information of the possible savings should the decision be made to close Wilton Fire Station. Please see the decision paper for further information

11.27 Following completion of the consultation process and further review of the information set out in the appendices to this report, no fundamental changes have been identified that require further consideration by the Authority in relation to the proposals for Wilton Fire Station.

11.28 This analysis has identified that the station has:

- Low demand
- Low-Moderate historic availability
- Low current availability
- Recruitment and retention issues
- Low community risk
- No fundamental changes from consultation for consideration
- Annual Revenue Saving of £202,525

12. Members' Working Group Recommendations

12.1 Following thorough scrutiny, review and assessment of the reports, data, supporting evidence and appendices, including the independent consultation and quality assurance report, the MWG has carefully considered its recommendations to the Authority in detail.

12.2 As set out within this report, the MWG welcomes the constructive engagement with Government regarding the Service's financial position, which presents a potential opportunity to improve the Service's funding stability, particularly in relation to council tax precept flexibility.

12.3 The MWG recognises that these discussions remain ongoing and that no firm commitments have yet been confirmed; however, this potential development has been an important consideration in its deliberations and has been taken into account alongside the current financial and operational evidence presented to the Authority.

12.4 The MWG is therefore recommending a two-tiered approach for consideration and approval by the Authority. This is intended to ensure that a clear and timely decision can be implemented once the position on council tax precept flexibility for 2027-28 is confirmed by central Government. This approach will allow the Service to respond promptly and appropriately, once the final funding position is known.

12.5 The recommendation will ensure there is no unnecessary delay in reaching a final decision, providing the Service and its staff with early clarity and certainty at the earliest opportunity. This is considered beneficial in supporting workforce planning, operational stability, and staff welfare and enables timely preparation for any agreed changes and allows the Service to focus on delivering its core functions with confidence and continuity.

12.6 The MWG make the following recommendation to the Authority, as detailed in Table 28 and in view of section 3 of this report outlining the current financial position, the Authority.

Members Working Group Recommendation
The Authority

1) Agree that all 8 Fire stations, namely, Bradford on Avon, Cranborne, Charmouth, Hamworthy, Maiden Newton, Mere, Ramsbury and Wilton fire stations remain open;
2) Agree to the implementation of the Service Modernisation Programme (Appendix C);

SUBJECT TO;

a) The Authority being granted flexibility to raise council tax precept to at least the national average for fire services for 2027/28,
b) The subsequent approval of the council tax precept rise by the Authority at its meeting in February 2027; and
c) There are no other and further significant reductions in funding

3) Should all of these conditions, in a), b) and c) above not be met, confirmation of which will be clear in budget setting papers presented to the Authority in February 2027, the Fire Authority agree that all eight fire stations, namely, Bradford on Avon, Cranborne, Charmouth, Hamworthy, Maiden Newton, Mere, Ramsbury and Wilton will be closed.

Table 28: MWG Recommendation to the Authority for decision.

12.7 To support the recommendation table above, the MWG made their determination aligned to the following rationale.

Station Name	High Level Overview	Rationale
Bradford on Avon	• Low demand • Low-Moderate fluctuating historic availability • Low current availability • Recruitment and retention issues • Low community risk • No fundamental changes from consultation for consideration • Annual Revenue Saving of £246,931	• Distance to next station is 10 minutes • Moderate improvements in availability with lower crewing (53.55%-76.78%) • Opportunity for special appliances • Less impact on neighbouring stations • Continue to support cross-border incidents
Charmouth	• Low demand • Moderate-Substantial fluctuating historic availability • Moderate (almost substantial) current availability • Low community risk • No fundamental changes from consultation for consideration • Annual Revenue Saving of £204,216	• Distance to next station is 11 minutes • Moderate (almost substantial) availability 79.78% • Substantial availability with lower crewing (up to 98.84%) • More isolated than others • Less impact on neighbouring stations • Continue to support cross-border incidents

Cranborne	• Low demand • Steady decline from Substantial-Low historic availability • Low current availability • Recruitment and retention issues • Low community risk • No fundamental changes from consultation for consideration • Annual Revenue Saving of £142,776	• Distance to next station is 8 minutes • Moderate-Substantial improvements in availability with lower crewing (22.29% to 81.44%) • Opportunity for special appliances • Less impact on neighbouring stations • Continue to support cross-border incidents
Hamworthy	• Low demand • Moderate-Substantial fluctuating historic availability • Moderate current availability • Wholetime station in close proximity • Low community risk • No fundamental changes from consultation for consideration • Annual Revenue Saving of £232,829	• Distance to next station is 7 minutes (wholetime station) • Low (almost moderate) availability improvement (due to already moderate/substantial levels of availability) • Opportunity for special appliances • Less impact on neighbouring stations • Continue to support cross-border incidents
Maiden Newton	• Low demand • Low historic availability • Low current availability (but highest since 2019) • Recruitment and retention issues • Low community risk • No fundamental changes from consultation for consideration • Annual Revenue Saving of £143,608	• Distance to next station is 14 minutes • Moderate improvements in availability with lower crewing (50.02-65.41%) • Opportunity for special appliances • More isolated than other stations • Less impact on neighbouring stations • Continue to support cross-border incidents
Mere	• Low demand • Low-Moderate fluctuating historic availability • Low current availability • Recruitment and retention issues • Low community risk • No fundamental changes from consultation for consideration • Annual Revenue Saving of £180,670	• Distance to next station is 7 minutes • Moderate-Substantial improvements in availability with lower crewing (34.99-83.98%) • Opportunity for special appliances • Less impact on neighbouring stations • Continue to support cross-border incidents
Ramsbury	• Low demand • Low-Moderate historic availability (Low except 2020/21 when moderate) • Low current availability • Low community risk • Good availability at neighbouring stations • No fundamental changes from consultation for consideration • Annual Revenue Saving of £135,042	• Distance to next station is 13 minutes • Marginal improvements, whilst still low, in availability with lower crewing (31.50% to 49.79%) • Opportunity for special appliances • Less impact on neighbouring stations • Continue to support cross-border incidents

Wilton	• Low demand • Low-Moderate historic availability • Low current availability • Recruitment and retention issues • Low community risk • No fundamental changes from consultation for consideration • Annual Revenue Saving of £202,525	• Distance to next station is 7 minutes (wholetime station) • Almost moderate improvement in availability (increasing availability to substantial level). • Opportunity for special appliances • Less impact on neighbouring stations • Continue to support cross-order incidents

Table 29: Rational for recommendations

13. Summary and Next Steps

13.1 The Service has delivered significant and sustained reform over the past ten years, achieving over £15m of recurring savings, while continuing to improve operational effectiveness and outcomes for the communities it serves.

13.2 The Service has demonstrated a clear ability to modernise, innovate and deliver value for money, operating as one of the most efficient fire and rescue services in the country.

13.3 Despite this strong track record, the Service faced a growing financial sustainability challenge, driven by constrained funding settlements, increasing costs, and evolving risk and demand.

13.4 Without greater funding stability, the pace and nature of change will continue to be driven by the need to address an immediate revenue deficit, rather than enabling a more measured and sustainable programme of reform.

13.5 Following the consultation, this paper has provided the Authority with the data analysis and information to allow them to make their final decision in relation to the Station Review project and potential station closures.

13.6 The Service will plan the necessary actions to implement the agreed outcomes, once the financial position is clear (in February 2027). This will be delivered in a planned and controlled manner, ensuring this is undertaken in the right way and with clear communication for any possible affected staff, with appropriate support and engagement throughout the process.

13.7 The Service will also continue its journey of building for the future, aligned to its wider Modernisation programme. To ensure it remains efficient, effective, and delivers value for money, aligned to the risks and demands faced, and focused on using available resources in the most effective way to support operational priorities and public safety.

Annex 1. Assessment of Risk & Demand

	Seasonal – Winter*	Seasonal – Spring*	Seasonal – Summer*	Seasonal – Autumn*	Wildfire*	Wildfire risk sites*	Flood*	Flood risk sites*	Thatch*	Thatch risk sites*	Availability modelling with 4	Availability modelling with 2	Availability Difference From 4 to 2	SSRIs (3 and above)*	Elderly Population Over 65	Elderly Population Local Authority Area	Elderly Population England	Change in over 65 from Local Authority Area*
Bradford on Avon	163 (26%)	150 (24%)	168 (27%)	147 (23%)	2 (0.5%)	0	5 (1.12%)	20 (2.17%)	0	3 (0.08%)	57.75%	76.78%	19.03%	4 (1.2%)	29.37%	21.85%	18.41%	7.52%
Charmouth	51 (25%)	46 (22%)	59 (28%)	52 (25%)	1 (0.25%)	0	11 (2.47%)	11 (1.20%)	0	95 (2.47%)	85.41%	98.84%	13.43%	2 (0.6%)	38.24%	29.58%	18.41%	8.66%
Cranborne	27 (22%)	34 (28%)	40 (33%)	21 (17%)	6 (1.5%)	2 (2.25%)	0	4 (0.43%)	1 (1.85%)	38 (0.99%)	24.01%	81.44%	57.43%	5 (1.6%)	26.72%	29.58%	18.41%	-2.86%
Hamworthy	395 (24%)	401 (24%)	506 (30%)	377 (22%)	24 (6.05%)	2 (2.25%)	11 (2.47%)	6 (0.65%)	0	2 (0.05%)	74.94%	94.72%	19.78%	19 (5.9%)	22.63%	21.60%	18.41%	1.03%
Maiden Newton	51 (22%)	37 (16%)	72 (32%)	68 (30%)	1 (0.25%)	0	5 (1.12%)	15 (1.63%)	1 (1.85%)	189 (4.92%)	49.69%	65.41%	15.72%	1 (0.3%)	28.82%	29.58%	18.41%	-0.76%
Mere	78 (24%)	92 (27%)	95 (27%)	82 (24%)	2 (0.5%)	0	0	12 (1.31%)	0	37 (0.96%)	39.53%	83.98%	44.45%	2 (0.6%)	33.86%	21.85%	18.41%	12.01%
Ramsbury	44 (24%)	42 (23%)	57 (31%)	43 (23%)	1 (0.25%)	0	0	4 (0.43%)	0	138 (3.59%)	32.35%	49.79%	17.44%	5 (1.6%)	26.98%	21.85%	18.41%	5.13%
Wilton	99 (21%)	102 (22%)	162 (35%)	103 (22%)	8 (2.02%)	1 (1.12%)	4 (0.90%)	16 (1.74%)	1 (1.85%)	23 (0.60%)	74.10%	94.54%	20.44%	3 (0.9%)	27.34%	21.85%	18.41%	5.49%
Service	23.42%	24.01%	27.64%	24.93%	397	89	446	919	54	3843				321				

	Housing	Incident Demand	Availability	Seasonal Incidents in station Area	Wildfire Incidents in station Area	Wildfire risk sites	Flood Incidents in station Area	Flood risk sites	Thatch Incidents in station Area	Thatch risk sites	Availability with reduced Crewing	Elderly Population	SSRIs	Overall Community Risk
	Dwelling increase	Per year	Appliance availability	% of Total Incident	% of Service Total	% of Service Total	% of Service Total	% of Service Total	% of Service Total	% of Service Total	Difference from 4 to 2 crew	Difference from Local Authority Area	% of Service Total	Number of Moderate or Substantial Risks *
Low	Under 1000	Under 1000	0-59%	0-30%	0-5%	0-5%	0-5%	0-5%	0-5%	0-5%	0-20%	0-5%	0-5%	0-4
Moderate	1001-5000	1001-1500	60-79%	31-40%	5.01%-10%	5.01%-10%	5.01%-10%	5.01%-10%	5.01%-10%	5.01%-10%	21-40%	5.01%-10%	5.01%-10%	5-8
Substantial	Over 5000	1501+	80%+	41+%	10.01+%	10.01+%	10.01+%	10.01+%	10.01+%	10.01+%	41+%	10.01+%	10.01+%	9-12

*Overall Community Risk score against 12 themed areas