



Freedom of Information Request FOI 26 77

Copies of minutes from meetings where proposed fire station closures were discussed, associated policies and risk assessments and criteria used to select stations at risk

Query:

Under the Freedom of Information Act I am formerly requesting

- 1. A copy of all the minutes from all of the informal and formal meetings that discussed the closure of the 8 fire stations in Dorset & Wiltshire. This is to include the discussions right from the beginning where it was decided cuts were needed to reduce the budget deficit.*
- 2. I am also requesting that you send me a copy of the relevant policies and risk assessments that you used to establish the need to cut the fire stations.*
- 3. Also I am requesting the data from all 50 of the fire stations and the criteria you used to establish which fire stations were at risk.*

We asked you to clarify whether you were asking for the policies and risk assessments that led to the need to make cuts (ie in terms of finances) or the policies and risk assessments to make the decision around closing fire stations. On 21 March you confirmed that you were asking for the policies and risk assessments used to make the decision around closing the fire stations.

Response:

Question 1:

Under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, a request for information can be refused where one or more exemptions listed in the Act apply. In this case we are claiming the following exemption: Section 21 – Information accessible by other means.

The minutes of the Fire Authority meetings where the closure of the 8 fire stations were discussed are available on our website:

[Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority](#)

To assist you, here is a table of the relevant meeting date and the minute reference:

Meeting date	Report reference	Subject	Relevant paragraph	Minute
8 February 2024	24/06	Budget and Precept Implications 24-25	3.4.3	24/06
6 February 2025	25/06	Budget and Precept	3.9.5	25/06



		Implications 25-26		
11 June 2025	25/21	Authority Appointments 25-26	6.1	25/21.16

With regard to the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 10 February 2026, we can confirm that this information is held, however, we are withholding it from disclosure under Section 22 (Information intended for future publication) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Section 22 applies where:

- The information is held with a view to publication at a later date
- There is a settled intention to publish the information at the time of the request
- It is reasonable in all the circumstances to withhold the information until publication

Section 22 is a qualified exemption and is therefore subject to the public interest test.

Factors in favour of disclosure:

- Promoting transparency and accountability
- Contributing to public understanding of the issue

Factors in favour of maintaining the exemption:

- ensuring the information is accurate and complete before publication
- protecting the integrity of an established and well managed publication timetable
- avoiding the release of draft, unverified, or potentially misleading material

On balance, we consider that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure at this time. The information will be published on our website once they have been approved and will be available via the following link: [Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service | Fire and Rescue Authority](#)

We confirm that we also hold minutes of member working group meetings however we consider these to be exempt under Section 36 2 b (ii) and 36 2 c of the FOIA. Section 36 provides that information is exempt if, in the opinion of the qualified person, release of this information would or would be likely to, inhibit the free and frank provision of advice or the free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation.



Section 36 is a qualified exemption, which requires us to carry out a public interest test to determine whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure. We would like to extend the time to respond to allow us to carry out the public interest test. We will therefore respond to you in full by 22 May at the latest, but will aim to respond before this date.

Question 2

Please see attached document.

Question 3

Please see attached document. You will notice that some of the fire stations have been highlighted. This table indicates their original position, but following application of the criteria at 1.8 (b) these stations were excluded.

Information/Detail accurate on the date provided: 5 May 2026