



## **Safer Together - Service Delivery Public Consultation**

Due to the delay in starting the consultation, we have extended the closing date so the public consultation will run from 3 July 2019 until 22 September 2019. Two more public 'drop-in' events have also been added, for Exmouth and Paignton.

To take part click [here](#).

### **Why we are changing now**

Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service was originally designed over 50 years ago. Since then, the make-up of our communities and the way in which people live their lives has changed significantly. The majority of our existing 85 fire stations have been in place for well over 30 years and the firefighter duty systems have not changed since the 1970s.

If we were to start from scratch and rebuild our fire service with new fire stations and duty systems to meet today's needs, it would undoubtedly look a lot different.

In future we need to make sure we can prioritise and increase our capacity to deliver targeted prevention and protection activities in our communities, focusing on the known risks in each area.

We must change to make sure we are providing the best possible response to match the modern risks of today. We need increased availability to ensure we can give the right response, at the right time, whilst making the most efficient use of resources.

We also need to make significant financial savings. The funding we receive is changing, with anticipated reduced grant funding from Central Government. Alongside this, costs are increasing, so we will need to meet a potentially significant revenue shortfall to enable the Service provision to continue.

### **Challenges around availability and demand for our fire and rescue service**

Whilst we currently provide a sufficiently high level of service, there are aspects that are no longer matching risk. We have too many fire engines and staff in areas where risks are low and therefore demand has fallen, and in other areas where the risk has increased, we do not have enough resources.

Due to the changing nature of employment within our communities over the years, we cannot recruit and retain sufficient On-call Firefighters to crew all of our existing fire engines as less people now work in the communities in which they live. Of those that do, many cannot afford (or cannot be released by their employers) to leave their jobs when their pager activates to attend emergency incidents for us. Our current requirement is for on-call staff to live and work within five minutes of a fire station. This may mean that even if a fire engine is at a fire station, there may not be enough firefighters available to crew it.

We have talked about shifts in the population of Devon and Somerset, but along with these new housing developments, there have been huge changes in our road networks. In some areas we have challenges navigating through busy traffic to reach emergencies, whilst in other areas, the new road networks help us to reach locations faster than before.

We need to change our staffing arrangements to make sure we have sufficient availability, and reconsider the location of fire stations to match resource to risk.

We are working with our staff to ensure they are fully involved with the consultation process and have all the support they need.

You can read more about why we need to change [here](#).

### **Options for change**

Six options for changing the way we operate our fire service were presented to the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority for consideration at a meeting on 28 June (details [here](#)). At the meeting the Fire Authority recommended that the Service proceed with the public consultation on the six options. In addition they also put forward a number of [recommendations](#) to be considered as part of the consultation process. The options are summarised below.

**Option 1** - Station closures at Appledore, Ashburton, Budleigh Salterton, Colyton, Kingston, Porlock, Topsham, Woolacombe)

**Option 2** - Station closures listed in option 1, plus removal of third fire engines at Bridgwater, Taunton, Torquay and Yeovil

**Option 3** - Option 2, plus removal of second fire engines at Crediton, Lynton, Martock and Totnes

**Option 4** - Option 3, plus change of status to day crewing at Barnstaple, Exmouth and Paignton

**Option 5** - Option 4, plus change of status of second fire engine to on-call at night only at Brixham, Chard, Dartmouth, Frome, Honiton, Ilfracombe, Okehampton, Sidmouth, Tavistock, Teignmouth, Tiverton, Wellington, Wells and Williton

**Option 6** - Option 5, plus the introduction of day crewed roving fire engines for targeted response and additional prevention work

**Option 7** - Mix and match option, the opportunity to include any combination of the elements used in the other options. Please see the consultation document for further details.