

Dorset Council - 14 May 2026

Public Participation – Questions

Question 1 – submitted by Carol King

In April, Cllr Legg posed a question to full council regarding how community resilience to emergency situations can be supported if four Fire Stations within Dorset are closed. I have a follow up question.

Maiden Newton has a fire station proposed for closure. The village regularly experiences emergency incidents that require a rapid local response. Minutes matter and lives will be lost.

As Cllr Legg pointed out, we are in the midst of a climate emergency. The Fire Service itself has recently stated that over the last two years, the number of wildfires has more than doubled. Natural habitats and wildlife are being lost at an alarming rate. In Dorset, Upton Heath is a prime example where homes exist near heathland. People will be evacuated and some may lose their homes and require emergency housing. This is not the time to be closing Fire Stations.

We are seeing an increase in flood related emergencies with rescues from vehicles and Highway disruption. These are often widespread events. With an expected increase in property flooding, more people will require rescues, evacuation and temporary shelter.

If local fire stations close, we will see an increase in response times and fires are more likely to involve multiple buildings, resulting in families without homes and requiring emergency accommodation.

The consequences for Dorset Council will be many including:

- Increased demand on Highways for emergency road closures and traffic management
- Greater need for temporary housing for residents displaced from their homes
- Higher likelihood of needing emergency evacuation shelters during major incidents such as wildfires and floods

As a Parish Councillor, I am helping to prepare our Community Emergency Resilience Plan (CERP). If we lose our local fire station, we anticipate a higher risk to life in our community due to an increase in response times. We may even need to consider how we cope if there are no fire engines available or able to reach our community.

Has the Council considered how losing Fire Stations will impact its own service provision such as funding an increase in emergency accommodation, provision of rest centres, emergency road closures and traffic management.

Dorset Council, like the Fire Service, has to produce a balanced budget every year. On this basis what adjustments are being considered by Dorset Council in relation to

provisions for additional costs in future year's brought about by the potential closure of local fire stations such as Maiden Newton, Charmouth, Hamworthy and Cranborne.