



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Please reply to:
The Office of Liz Kendall MP
42 Narborough Road
Leicester
LE3 0BQ

Mr Nicholas Rushton
Leader and Chair of the Conservative Group
Leicestershire Combined Fire Authority
County Hall,
Glenfield,
Leicester
LE3 8RA

Our Ref: SO/LEIC01189/01150261
10 November 2015

Dear Nicholas

Proposed cuts to Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service

I am writing to you on behalf of a number of my constituents who have contacted me regarding their serious concerns about the proposed cuts to Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service.

Let me start by saying I fully understand that the Combined Fire Authority faces extremely difficult decisions due to cuts in funding from central government. As you know, on Friday 6th November I held a public meeting in my constituency to discuss the implications of these cuts for our local fire services. This was attended by a large number of residents from across the city and by local fire fighters. I am grateful that Andrew Brodie, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer, also attended the meeting to outline the proposals that are currently being consulted on.

I have to tell you that my constituents were deeply shocked to learn about the proposed closure of Central Station, and that a fire engine is due to be removed from Western Fire Station on 2nd January 2016 – a decision that Mr Brodie said has already been taken.

My constituents are understandably extremely worried that closing Central will increase pressure on Western station at a time when it is due to lose one of its engines. They are also angry that there was no public consultation on the removal of the engine and rightly believe that the loss of the engine needs to be consulted on alongside the wider proposals. I therefore urge you in the strongest possible terms to halt the planned removal of the engine from Western Station in January until the current consultation, including the closure of Central Station, has been completed.

A number of other very important points were raised at the meeting. Western Fire Station is in close proximity to the M1 and concerns were raised about the availability to respond to fires in the city if there were a major incident along this busy road, taking into consideration the potential closure of Central Station. At the meeting, Mr Brodie mentioned that three to four fire engines could respond to incidents in Western within ten minutes when coming from Birstall or Southern

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if Central Station is closed. I would like to know whether external factors such as heavy traffic, road closures and fires in other areas of the county have been factored in.

My constituents also questioned how the Fire Service's excellent track record on preventing fires could continue with cuts to front line staff, and whether Leicester's increasing population has been factored into predictions of risk in future.

Finally, my constituents asked whether other savings are being considered, in particular from the Service's Headquarters. Could you provide further information on whether you are considering selling the building or land? Could you also outline whether Leicestershire Fire Service has discussed working together with Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Fire Services – for example to make savings in back office and administration costs.

To emphasise once again – my immediate priority as a local MP is to stop the removal of the fire engine at Western until the wider consultation process has been completed.

As ever, thank you for your attention and I look forward to hearing from you.

With best wishes

Liz Kendall MP
Member of Parliament for Leicester West

CC: Sir Peter Soulsby, Vice Chair of Labour Group, Leicestershire Combined Fire Authority
CC: Mr Richard Chandler, Chief Executive Fire and Rescue Service