

27th June 2019

Dear member of the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Buckfastleigh Town Council and the people of Buckfastleigh to ask you not to contemplate the closure of Ashburton fire station and other rural fire services.

Increasing cover for growing urban areas like Newton Abbot should NOT be at the expense of remote rural populations, who will inevitably suffer longer initial response times and delayed or unavailable backup.

These latest proposals merely follow the pattern established over the last years of removing more and more resources from our rural communities and focusing spending on central urban settlements. Our youth service, hospitals, early years, police, buses and schools have been stripped back or removed and centralised services are not easily or quickly accessible, putting the lives and well-being of our residents at increasing risk.

It is not understood by the Town Council or our communities why more cuts – and lets be clear that these are quite clearly seen as cuts - to the service are necessary when accounts show under-spends of nearly two million pounds and the presence of large reserves. We feel it is an insult to our intelligence to dress these proposed cuts up as an improvement to the service under the title 'Safer Together' and you will find that any such proposals of cuts to the service that we rely on will be highly unpopular and resisted by the entire community.

Our firefighters do a brave, hard and mostly thankless task to keep us safe and the proposed changes will clearly mean an increased risk of harm to members of more remote communities.

Please ask yourselves if you want to be responsible for the injuries and loss of lives that will surely result if these changes go ahead...

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy Stokes". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Cllr Andy Stokes
Chair Buckfastleigh Town Council