



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

18<sup>th</sup> August 2014

Kevin Herniman Esq.,  
Virginia Cottage,  
Nettleton,  
Chippenham,  
Wiltshire,  
SN14 7NT.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Herniman'.

Thank you for your email of 4<sup>th</sup> August detailing your opposition to the merger of the Wiltshire and Dorset Fire Services.

As you know I very much agree with you and enclose a copy of the letters I have sent to Fire Chief and the Fire Authority on the subject.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to James Gray.

15<sup>th</sup> August 2014

Cllr Chris Devine,  
Chairman,  
Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority,  
Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters,  
Manor House,  
Potterne, Devizes,  
Wiltshire, SN10 5PP.

Thank you for your letter of 8<sup>th</sup> August inviting me to take part in the consultation entitled 'Strengthening our Fire and Rescue Service.'

You will know I think from my public comments and from a meeting which I had with the Fire Chief and with your predecessor as Chairman in the early part of this year that I am personally strongly opposed to the notion of amalgamating the Wiltshire Fire Service with Dorset.

I enclose the letter which I have used in the past laying out my reasons for that thinking.

Reading your consultation document, I remain puzzled by the arithmetic which concludes that you will save £4m by a merger and significantly less by increasing collaboration with the Dorset Fire Authority or with local Councils. The language used is less than clear.

You say for example under scenario 3 that "[the merger] provides the greatest financial saving. This is because it will enable both services to maximise savings from working with local councils and other partners as well as the money we spend on fire specialisms within the two services."

I fear there is absolutely no substance behind that particular sentence, which needs significant expansion.

The document then continues "For example it has been calculated that from their

16<sup>th</sup> December 2013

Chief Fire Officer Simon Routh-Jones,  
Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service,  
Manor House,  
Potterne,  
Devizes,  
Wiltshire, SN10 5PP.

Thank you for your letter of 13<sup>th</sup> December, advising me that you have started work with the Dorset Fire Authority with the potential for an amalgamation of the Wiltshire and Dorset Fire Services and a joint Fire Control Centre in Potterne.

I have to say that my initial reaction to that would be one of grave concern. Wiltshire and Dorset have virtually nothing in common apart from having a common border. The large part of my constituency is as much as 100 miles away from Dorset, and Wiltshire as a county has much more in common with Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Gloucestershire.

I was a passionate opponent of the regionalisation of the fire services and was very glad that that ill thought through scheme was abandoned. I remain firmly committed to Wiltshire's being a satisfactory unit of Government both in terms of local Government and in terms of fire, health and police services.

I am also not certain that the financial stringency which we are facing at the moment is necessarily a good reason for carrying out a change which would be in place for many generations to come.

It is only right therefore to let you know that I am by no means convinced of the usefulness of combining the Wiltshire and Dorset fire authorities, and am very likely to come to the position of being strongly opposed to it. Your letter I fear does not