Dear Gareth Bacon AM

I am writing to formally register Lewisham’s position in relation to the London Fire Service Consultation. Whilst we completely understand and recognise the significant financial position the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority is in, we also have significant concerns about the impact on the safety of our residents if the appliances that have been removed for the past 2 years are not returned.

Lewisham Council has undertaken a detailed review of emergency services and has noted in the Public Spending report of 2015 the absence of Forest Hill’s second appliance has had a negative impact on the time taken for both the first and second fire crews to arrive across Lewisham.

Since the implementation of Fifth London Safety Plan in 2014 and the closure of Downham fire station the most recent data shows:

- that on average the borough has seen an increase of over half a minute in the arrival of the first fire engine at an incident. This has gone up from 4 minutes 45 seconds in 2012/13 to 5 minutes 18 seconds in 2014/15 an increase of 33 seconds.

- The borough has seen an increase of 41 seconds for the arrival of the second fire engine; this has gone up from 6 minutes 23 seconds in 2012/13 to 7 minutes 4 seconds in 2014/15.

- Bellingham and Crofton Park wards have seen increases of over half a minute for the arrival of the first fire engine at an incident.

- Crofton Park, Forest Hill, Perry Vale and Rushey Green wards have all seen increases of over 1 minute for the second crew to arrive, residents of Perry Vale ward are on average having to wait 2 minutes 48 seconds longer for back up crews to arrive.

- The removal of the fire engine from Forest Hill would also impact on 3 wards in LB Southwark, East Dulwich and Village wards are having to wait over a minute longer for the second fire engine

Lewisham Council believes that the permanent removal of a fire appliance will only lead to further deterioration in arrival times. It is for this reason that the Council supports Option A.

I look forward to hearing from you and happy to meet to discuss the concerns in Lewisham to assist in any decisions being taken.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Janet Daby
Cabinet Member for Community Safety
London Borough of Lewisham