

BEXHILL AND BATTLE CONSTITUENCY LABOUR PARTY

7 Northcliffe
Bexhill on sea
TN39 1RA

June 2023

Dear Councillor Galley

I am writing to you as Chair of Bexhill and Battle Constituency Labour Party along with Mark Legg our Trade Union Liaison Officer. We want to set out our concerns about the existing and proposed cuts to services which our members feel go beyond finding efficiency savings to endangering the effectiveness of the service to provide adequate protection to the public.

We wish to raise the following points:

- Given Bexhill and Battle constituency is a mainly rural constituency we are concerned at the degradation of the Retained Duty System that serves our rural and farming communities. We feel that the duty system needs to be overhauled with a more modern approach and funded with new investment. We understand that appliances based in Burwash, Pevensey and Hertsmonceux are often not available due to lack of staffing and that this means that appliances from our permanently staffed stations in Battle and Bexhill are called out – which in turn leaves those areas under resourced.
- With regard to Battle Fire Station – we are concerned about the loss of the second appliance and full-time firefighters based in the town. We understand that call numbers have increased by a third in recent years and that in the event of a major incident, the local station will not be able to respond appropriately.
- In Bexhill we understand that the number of permanent firefighters has been cut from twelve to ten. We also understand that the original proposal was to cut back to nine but that this was withdrawn following an intervention from the Fire Brigades Union. This is worrying given how busy the fire station is with over 1400 calls a year. For example, we know that those first on the scene will be short on number and will have to wait