

## Liverpool Echo – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2015

A public meeting will be held to discuss the proposed closure of Wirral fire stations.

The meeting, to be held in the St Mary's Centre on Saughall Massie Road at 6.30pm on Monday, is part of a 12 week consultation to discuss Merseyside fire service's plans for a station merger for West Wirral.

The consultation will consider the option of closing stations in West Kirby and Upton and building a new facility on Saughall Massie Road in Upton, or closing the West Kirby station and relocating crews to the station in Upton.

Chief Fire Officer Dan Stephens said: "We have to make structural changes to emergency response cover across Merseyside in order to deliver the savings required following grant cuts.

"I am of the professional view that a merger in West Wirral would deliver a less impactful operational outcome than the outright closure of West Kirby or any other option open to the Fire and Rescue Authority.

"I encourage people to take part in our consultation, attend the public meetings, read the information about the proposals on our Service website and fill in our questionnaire. We want to hear your views."

The fire service had held a 12-week consultation on proposals to close West Kirby and Upton stations and build a new station in Greasby - but the site was withdrawn after residents objected because it was on greenbelt land.

Meetings will also be held at the Holy Cross Church community rooms in Woodchurch at 6.30pm on April 28 and at Hoylake Community Centre at 6.30pm on May 5.

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Letter to Wirral Globe 11<sup>th</sup> March 2015



Wirral Globe 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015

A FACT-finding exercise is to take place to ensure land in Upton is suitable for development as part of a consultation on fire cover in west Wirral.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue service is currently carrying out a 12-week consultation on the future of the area's fire stations.

The exercise, which ends on May 18, will consider two options.

On the table is a proposal to close West Kirby and Upton fire stations and merge them at a new station in Saughall Massie Road, Upton.

The other option is the outright closure of West Kirby.

As part of the consultation, a topographical study will be carried out on land on Saughall Massie Road.

The survey – which will take place on Wednesday and Thursday – is required in order for architects to ensure the site is suitable for any development and to prepare initial designs of a potential new fire station for display or discussion at upcoming public meetings.

Fire chiefs say the survey does not mean a decision has already been made.

Throughout the consultation, the public will be invited to suggest suitable alternative options for fire authority budget savings.

The outcomes of the consultation will be reported back to the Authority for a definitive decision in June.

A spokesman for Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service said: "We would like to reassure the public that no decision has been taken regarding the proposal for a new fire station on this site and no planning application has been submitted.

"The outcome of the consultation will be reported to Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority for their consideration before a decision on the proposal is made.

"The topographical survey work is solely for the purpose of preparing initial design proposals as part of the consultation process to allow the public to discuss what a fire station could look like at that location."

Over the last four years the Authority has had to make savings of £20 million as a result of Government Grant cuts. A further saving of £6.3 million is needed by the end of 2015/16.

The consultation process will involve public meetings at locations in Saughall Massie, Upton and West Kirby, a stakeholders' meeting at Hoylake, three focus groups and a joint forum.

A consultation document has been distributed in public buildings, local stores and businesses across West Wirral.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority held a 12-week consultation on the proposed closure of West Kirby and Upton fire stations and the building of a new station in Greasby but, following opposition from residents, the site was withdrawn by Wirral Council.

**The public meetings will be held for this consultation on the following dates:**

- Monday, April 20, starting at 6.30pm at the St Mary’s Centre, 127 Saughall Massie Road, CH49 4LA.
- Tuesday, April 28, at Holy Cross Church community rooms, by Holy Cross Church, Woodchurch, CH49 7LS, starting at 6.30pm.
- Tuesday, May 5, at Hoylake Community Centre, The Parade, Hoyle Road, Hoylake, CH47 3AG, starting at 6.30pm.

**The public consultation will consider two options:**

- The closure of West Kirby and Upton fire stations, the building of a new station at Saughall Massie Road.
- The re-designation of one of the two existing wholetime appliances as “wholetime retained” (with a 30-minute recall), whilst;
- Inviting suggestions for other suitable alternative options to deliver the savings required as a result of further cuts to the authority budget.

**OR:**

- The outright closure of West Kirby as the alternative to merger.
- The re-designation of one of the two existing wholetime appliances as “wholetime retained” (with a 30-minute recall) whilst;
- Inviting suggestions for other suitable alternative options to deliver the savings required as a result of further cuts to the authority budget.

Comments

Let us see which supermarket group bids for the West Kirby and Upton existing fire station sites. Something serious is being hidden here. Also the Heswall fire station site, another M&S as the existing one in Heswall is too small. Saughall Massie is a nightmare to drive through in a car. Imagine responding to a persons reported trapped, on those roads, especially at school times.

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Tonight, the first of three public meetings will be held (starting at 6.30pm at the St Mary's Centre, 127 Saughall Massie Road, CH49 4LA) to consult with the public on options which include building a new fire station in Saughall Massie (if Upton Fire Station & West Kirby Fire Station close). Another option being consulted on is the closure of West Kirby Fire Station and keeping Upton Fire Station open.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service have produced an [eighteen page consultation document](#) which details their reasons for the consultation. There is also an [online questionnaire](#) as part of the consultation and you can email [consultation2@merseyfire.gov.uk](mailto:consultation2@merseyfire.gov.uk) with your views or write to Wirral Consultation, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, Bridle Road, Bootle, L30 4YD.

The twelve week consultation ends on the 18th May 2015 and there will be two further public meetings in addition to the one tonight in Saughall Massie.

**Tuesday, 28th April**, at Holy Cross Church community rooms, by Holy Cross Church, Woodchurch, CH49 7LS, starting at **6.30pm**.

**Tuesday, 5th May**, at Hoylake Community Centre, The Parade, Hoyle Road, Hoylake, CH47 3AG, starting at **6.30pm**.

A transcript of the reasons given by the Chief Fire Officer for the consultation [at the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority meeting on the 29th January can be read here](#).

You may also be interested in [Saughall Massie residents express their opposition to fire station plans at first consultation meeting](#) which includes video of the meeting.

1. Is this another PFI boondoggle ?
2. Haven't they built it yet!
  
3. Please listen to people who want to leave Upton Fire Station open. You want to build next to sheltered housing, the noise and busy road while you are building is going to upset a lot of people. Some in there 90% also people in the Saughall Massie do not want the fire station for a number of reasons. Also we want the green belt saved. A lot of people walk and enjoy the nature and feel at peace just relaxing watching the birds, ducks, swans. Also I have been told bats can be seen there.

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# Fire station debate

■ Consultation on the closure or merging on ends March 18

By Emma Rigby  
emma.rigby@newsquest.co.uk

A FACT-finding exercise has taken place to ensure land in Upton is suitable for development as part of a consultation on fire cover in west Wirral.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue service is currently carrying out a 12-week consultation on the future of the area's fire stations.

The exercise, which ends on May 18, will consider two options.

On the table is a proposal to close West Kirby and Upton fire stations and merge them at a new station in Saughall Massie Road, Upton.

The other option is the outright closure of West Kirby.

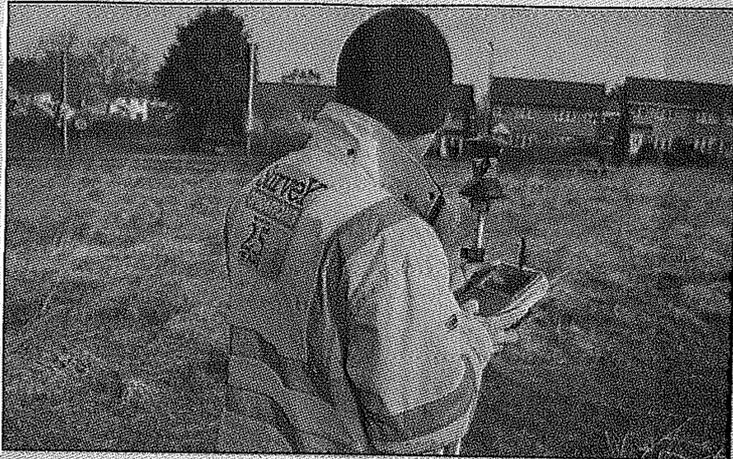
As part of the consultation, a topographical study has been carried out on land on Saughall Massie Road.

The survey - which took place on Wednesday and Thursday - was required in order for architects to ensure the site is suitable for any development and to prepare initial designs of a potential new fire station for display or discussion at upcoming public meetings.

Fire chiefs say the survey does not mean a decision has already been made.

Throughout the consultation, the public will be invited to suggest suitable alternative options for fire authority budget savings.

The outcomes of the consultation will be reported back to the authority for a definitive decision in June.



A surveyor at the proposed site of the new fire station at Saughall Massie Road

A spokesman for Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service said: "We would like to reassure the public that no decision has been taken regarding the proposal for a new fire station on this site and no planning application has been submitted."

"The outcome of the consultation will be reported to Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority for their consideration before a decision on the proposal is made."

"The topographical survey work is solely for the purpose of preparing initial design proposals as part of the consultation process to allow the public to discuss what a fire station could look like at that location."

Over the last four years the authority has had to make savings of £20 million

as a result of government grant cuts. A further saving of £6.3 million is needed by the end of 2015/16.

The consultation will involve public meetings at locations in Saughall Massie, Upton and West Kirby, a meeting at Hoylake, three focus groups and a joint forum.

A consultation document has been distributed in public buildings, local stores and businesses across West Wirral.

The meetings all start at 6.30pm and will be held on:

- Monday, April 20, at St Mary's Centre, Saughall Massie Road.
- Tuesday, April 28, Holy Cross Church community rooms, Woodchurch.
- Tuesday, May 5, Hoylake Community Centre, Hoylake.

Wirral Globe – 15<sup>th</sup> April

SCHEME offering householders cash to attend crucial consultation meetings on the future of fire service cover has been blasted by Wirral councillors.

Labour council leader Phil Davies said he had "never heard anything like it" and Tory group veteran Chris Blakeley branded the move as "outrageous."

A 12-week public consultation began on March 2 and runs until May 18 over highly-controversial proposals to close West Kirby and Upton fire stations and merge them at a new facility in Saughall Massie.

The results of the meetings and forums will be reported to Merseyside Fire Authority and used as a basis for making a final decision.

But the *Globe* can reveal that residents have been telephoned by a marketing company and offered up to £30 to attend forum meetings.

The firm has been hired by the cash-strapped fire authority to offer payment - "to cover expenses" - as a means of ensuring the events are "fully representative."

Councillor Davies said: "It's the first I've heard about this and it is certainly an unusual idea.

"I've organised and attended a great many meetings over the years and never have I heard anything like the public being offered money to go."

Saughall Massie ward councillor Chris Blakeley said: "It's an outrageous idea.

"It puts the validity of the meetings into question.

"If you pay someone £30 to attend, it could be argued they'll say whatever you want them to say.

"I think it's all part of the fire authority's mission to get its plan for a new station in Saughall Massie.

"They'll use these people to put forward the pretence that it's what the public wants.

"It's very strange when the fire authority always says it needs to save money but is prepared to pay people to attend public meetings."

*Globe* reader Frank Palin, who lives near the proposed site of the new fire station, said: "I think it's disgraceful. This is public money they're using.

"We should not be giving people out-of-pocket expenses to attend a public meeting."

Last year a meeting held in Greasby Methodist Church Centre, called to discuss the future of fire cover in the area, was so massively over-attended that hundreds of concerned householders were forced to stand outside.

A spokesman for Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service said: "We pay expenses, for example for travelling expenses or child care, to those attending the forum meetings, which last between two and two and a-half hours.

"This ensures that a fully representative group of people from the area which would be affected by the proposals can afford to attend and give their views.

"We are also holding open public meetings for anyone who wants to attend those."

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Wirral Globe 28<sup>th</sup> April 2015

MORE than 150 people were unable to get into a public meeting on the proposed merger of Wirral fire stations tonight as there was not enough room at the venue.

Taking place at St Mary's Centre on Saughall Massie Road, Upton, it was the first of three to be held as part of a 12-week consultation on the plans.

The 120 who made it in, before health and safety regulations prohibited allowing any more, heard Merseyside's chief fire officer Dan Stephens outline proposals which include merging West Kirby and Upton fire stations at a site in Saughall Massie Road.

Another option is the outright closure of West Kirby station and relocating crews to Upton.

As the meeting went on, there were shouts of "this venue is unsuitable."

Conservative councillor for Moreton West and Saughall Chris Blakeley urged Mr Stephens to organise a second meeting for people unable to get in



Cllr Blakeley said "Clearly, more than 150 people lost out on the opportunity to make their views known, which was a disappointment.

"The fact that the chief fire officer won't make a commitment to hold another meeting in Saughall Massie, as he did in Greasby, and he won't make that commitment.

"It says it all about the fire authority. They're not interested in the views of local people. They just want to build a new fire station, ride roughshod over everybody and get over it.

"We will fight the authority. We will fight the planning department and we will fight the Labour Council to ensure our greenbelt is not desecrated."

Mr Stephens told the *Globe*: "We have to make structural changes to emergency response cover across Merseyside in order to deliver the savings required following grant cuts.

"I will take a view based on whether I think there would be a different outcome from that which we've see tonight, because there are difficulties in us securing a venue that's big enough to accommodate all the interest.

"We recognise that we get criticised what ever we do.

"But that said, I will discuss it with the chair of the Fire & Rescue Authority and we'll take a view based on that."

Among concerns raised by residents were the proposed fire station's impact on house prices.

One resident said the fire station plan was "an accident waiting to happen".

Mr Stephens continued: "I think the people of Saughall Massie, as we fully expected they would, have made their position clear.

The other public meetings being held as part of this consultation will be held on the following dates:

- Tuesday, April 28, at Holy Cross Church community rooms, by Holy Cross Church, Woodchurch, CH49 7LS, starting at 6.30pm.
- Tuesday, May 5, at Hoylake Community Centre, The Parade, Hoyle Road, Hoylake, CH47 3AG, starting at 6.30pm.

The outcomes of the consultation will be reported back to the Authority for a definitive decision in June.

## COMMENTS

Why don't they modernise the station in Upton as they did with Birkenhead with some of the 3.5 million that it would cost to build a new station in Saughall Massie.

I am a resident of Saughall Massie and after having a new road built for the open golf tournament which has created a congested cut through to the m53 and a night time race track at weekends.

What we definitely don't need is more traffic and noise and have the fire authority really looked at the proposed site adjacent to elderly people's bungalows.

Where are our local Labour councillors absolutely nowhere that's were, which seems it to be one of their stitched up public consultations they role out when the decision and plans have long since been made and agreed.

Lyndale certainly springs to mind when parents, teachers and local public disagreed after consultation.

After this meeting the Fire brigade and council can clearly see Saughall Massie as Greasby residents don't want this built.

Let's see if they listen to the public, didn't Councillor Phil Davies veto the Greasby idea let's see what he does now.

Stephens is handing you all death sentences. Where are the doctored risk assessments=nowhere. Land at west Kirby and Upton will be sold for nothing to supermarket chains. Next step he will close Heswall for a shopping mall.

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arrived 15 minutes before the advertised start of the meeting to find a large crowd on the pavement unable to get in. I understand from a neighbour who did get in that the Chief Fire Officer spent most of the meeting talking about response times. As the proposed site in Saughall Massie is approximately 2 minutes drive from the existing Upton station, how can this make any difference to response times, especially as

the back lanes to Hoylake and West Kirby are narrow and often congested? And the response time to an emergency at Arrowe Park Hospital would of course be 2 minutes longer! Ditch this proposal now!

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The frustration and anger of residents whose views and fears of being ignored are well founded in such exercises of 'consultation'. Similar expressions of protest have been disregarded in connection with Lyndale, libraries, nursery provision and the notorious Rock Ferry High School site where the MP referred to residents and their concerns as "a little group" (3,000 + petitioners!) and "mean spirited" - to be ignored! Politicians are elected and take an oath to "represent" their electors not a party whip.

Whilst the Fire Authority seeks to change station arrangements - while the Council will decide the planning application (including highway affects) each subject to 'public consultation' - what value is such consultation if their electors are to be ignored? Of course the 'merger' as with other 'cost cutting' measures are caused by the decisions of the ConDem coalition government which has slashed funding in our area to enable tax benefits to the very rich e.g. bankers on huge bonuses.

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It says on the fire brigades site that the proposal/consultation for a new station in Greasby was halted by Wirral Council after protests from local residents.

Wirral council's new Chief exec or Cllr Davies need to explain why the protests of residents of Saughall Massie are any different to those residents in Greasby and why they haven't halted this consultation?

Received a pamphlet from local Labour councillor which he is quoted as saying " All plans for the new station will be made with the local residents views listened too".

Sounds like a done deal to me and one Labour councillor in a fire brigades meeting described the green belt land as "Just a bit of scruffy ground".

The fact no Labour councillor has spoken against this proposal as with Lyndale and every other council consultation implies Saughall Massie will be getting a new fire station and West Kirby a new KFC and Upton a Tesco's express.

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The only sensible answer is to combine all the emergency services, Fire, Police , Ambulances and sell off the surplus property they all have this would reduce the Administration, Supplies, Maintenance, and running costs by millions every year for generations. Plus training pensions and far too many high earners who actually do not do a scrap of good to any of the emergency services, except eat up the budget.

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Hilary Jones, UKIP, standing in Wirral West, believes "austerity has gone too far when we see things like West Kirkby fire station being closed. The alternative options aren't good enough".

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## Wirral Globe 5<sup>th</sup> May 2015

A THIRD public meeting will be held tonight to discuss the proposed merger of Wirral fire stations.

Merseyside's chief fire officer Dan Stephens will outline proposals, which include merging West Kirby and Upton fire stations at a site in Saughall Massie Road, during the meeting at Hoylake Community Centre in Hoyle Road, Hoylake.

Another option is the outright closure of West Kirby station and relocating crews to Upton.

Tonight's meeting, which starts at 6.30pm, is part of a 12-week consultation on the plans.

Mr Stephens said: "We have to make structural changes to emergency response cover across Merseyside in order to deliver the savings required following grant cuts.

"I am of the professional view that a merger in West Wirral would deliver a less impactful operational outcome than the outright closure of West Kirby or any other option open to the Fire and Rescue Authority.

"I encourage people to take part in our consultation, attend the public meetings, read the information about the proposals on our Service website and fill in our questionnaire. We want to hear your views."

The outcomes of the consultation will be reported back to Merseyside Fire Authority for a definitive decision in June.

A public consultation document can be downloaded from [www.merseyfire.gov.uk/asp/opsResponse/pdf/WIRRAL\\_CONSULTATION\\_DOCUMENT\\_2015.pdf](http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk/asp/opsResponse/pdf/WIRRAL_CONSULTATION_DOCUMENT_2015.pdf) along with an online survey at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/saughall\\_massie](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/saughall_massie) You can email the fire authority at [consultation2@merseyfire.gov.uk](mailto:consultation2@merseyfire.gov.uk) or write to: Wirral Consultation, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, Bridle Road, Bootle, L30 4YD.

### Comments

- Signed,sealed and delivered..
- Already sorted with the Upton and West Kirby site sold to supermarket chains, look at the present locations.

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## Wirral Globe 6<sup>th</sup> May 2015

AS the *Wirral Globe* pointed out in a recent issue, it was a public shame that people were locked out of the meeting called to discuss the new site for the proposed merger of fire stations on the green belt area in Saughall Massie.

Chief Fire Officer Dan Stephens refused to listen to public concerns regarding the suitability of the proposed site.

If he had done his homework properly he would realise that 'The Four Lanes' leading to West Kirby and beyond are narrow, winding lanes with high hedgerows on either side.

The lanes are used by commuters and traffic is bumper-to-bumper at rush hour.

They are also used by farmers to move live stock, farming equipment etc.

A fire engine hurtling along answering a 999 call would be a disaster waiting to happen and eventually end in carnage.

It would behove politicians and public servants alike to remember that public opinion matters, local democracy matters and social inclusion matters.

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**Letter to Wirral Globe 15<sup>th</sup> May 2015**

GREASBY residents are justly delighted that because of a united display of rejection, the threat of moving West Kirby fire station will not be placed on the area.

Alas! The rejection has meant that the village of Saughall Massie is now under consideration.

Hundreds of Saughall Massie residents attended a meeting in the village centre.

Unfortunately, the chosen venue was unable to accommodate all the residents who had to wait outside.

So what is being discussed for Saughall Massie now?

In effect, the same proposals which were rejected by Greasby.

Perhaps, if some of us wrote to our MPs, they might be persuaded to intervene?

We cannot let our village be changed forever.

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**Letter to Wirral Globe 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2015**

I SEE yet again that some people would rather the people of West Kirby, Hoylake and Meols wait longer for a fire engine than have a new station built on land that most people use to let their dogs foul on.

The letter last week in Globe Mailbox was wrong saying West Kirby fire station is "moving" - it is being closed down for good.

This means people in the area it covers would have to wait a lot longer for a fire engine to arrive from Upton.

Saughall Massie was identified as a place to locate a new station to cover both West Kirby and Upton equally.

As a resident of Hoylake I'm getting fed up of hearing people complaining about how the new station would look and their vastly exaggerated lies about noise and traffic as if they outweigh my concerns of whether I would still be alive by the time a fire engine arrived from Upton if I needed it.