



Clerk,  
County Durham and Darlington  
Fire and Rescue Authority,  
County Hall,  
Durham DH1 5UL

## Safest People, Safest Places

This matter is being dealt with by: Cllr John Shuttleworth, CFO Steve Helps  
Ext: 5555  
Date: 31 January 2023

Rt Hon Chris Philp MP  
Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

Dear Minister,

### Funding challenges

We write to outline our concerns regarding the potential for escalating salary costs in anticipation of a future pay award for firefighters. We fully acknowledge that fire and rescue service pay is a matter for the National Employers and the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services, however as Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire, we believe it is vital that you understand the impact increasing pay costs are having on the Authority's already challenging financial position.

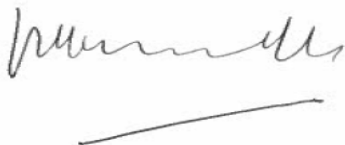
Whilst we recognise and support fair pay for fire and rescue service staff, this must be affordable and support the longer-term sustainability of fire authorities. This is an area we will be raising with the National Employers at the forthcoming consultation meeting scheduled for the 06 February 2023.

The flexibility for standalone fire and rescue authorities to increase Band D council tax in 2023/24 by £5 is most welcome along with the increase in both revenue support grant and baseline funding level. However, despite the increase in government funding and an increase in council tax of £5, the Authority is still faced with a funding shortfall in 2023/24 of £0.6M, furthermore each 1% increase in pay costs the Authority a further £250,000 per year.

Whilst we accept the financial implications for firefighters pay are yet to be determined, we recognise that if a revised offer is made it is highly likely to have a significant impact on the Authority's financial position. I have copied this letter to Emma Lawrence, Head of Fire Funding, who is in contact with Tony Hope the Service's Deputy Chief Executive and Treasurer to firstly identify the opportunity for immediate financial support during the current financial year and secondly highlight the importance of future precept flexibility at a minimum of £5 for County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority beyond 2023/24.

We hope that the information set out above illustrates our concerns and we welcome further engagement with you and your officials and your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Shuttleworth', with a long horizontal line underneath.

Cllr John Shuttleworth  
**Chair of County Durham and Darlington  
Combined Fire Authority**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Helps', with a stylized, circular flourish at the end.

Steve Helps  
**Chief Fire Officer**

Copy to Emma Lawrence