

Save Our Services in Surrey (SOSiS)
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To: Residents Associations in Spelthorne

Dear friends

MARCH TO SAVE SPELTHORNE FIRE STATIONS

As you will be very aware, fire services in the borough are to be slashed in half!

Save Our Services in Surrey (SOSiS) have organised a march and rally to show the strength of feeling about the proposed cuts to our fire stations.

SATURDAY 7 DECEMBER ASSEMBLE 11.30AM

IN FOREST DRIVE (BY THE SIDE OF SUNBURY FIRE STATION)
MARCH THROUGH ASHFORD TOWN CENTRE TO STAINES FIRE STATION (OPPOSITE ASHFORD HOSPITAL)

SOSiS is a Surrey-wide network of trade unions, community groups and concerned residents. We have organised this demonstration to show Surrey County Council the strength of feeling in the borough against their plans to cut fire safety levels in Spelthorne. Surrey County Council intend to close both our fire stations and to replace them with just one - halving our fire safety at a stroke. The Council Cabinet will make the decision at their meeting on 17th December so there will only be 10 DAYS TO SAVE OUR FIRE STATIONS from the day of the march.

Already, through the consultation process, 11 residents associations, 3 packed consultation meetings and every local councillor and political party has come out against these cuts. Even the leader of Spelthorne Council has spoken out and the borough council has itself voted against the cuts. The local paper (Herald series) has been full of articles and letters on this issue over the past few weeks and no-one is speaking out in favour of the cuts.

We have seen wave after wave of attempted cuts in public services in Spelthorne. Over the past 3 years we have seen the attempt to close Brooklands FE College in Ashford and Shortwood Infant School in Staines. Save Our Services in Surrey were part of both those campaigns which were eventually successful because local people stood together and spoke out. Now the County Council wants to cut our fire services by 50% - the biggest fire cuts EVER in a Surrey borough - making Spelthorne the least fire-resourced borough in Surrey. You can do the maths - there are 35 fire engines in Surrey to cover 11 boroughs. Spelthorne will be left with just ONE. We have to speak out.

Spelthorne is one of the highest populated parts of Surrey and includes: The highest concentration of tower blocks; the busiest roads (including the M3 and M25), some of the most deprived areas in Surrey; the most dangerous stretch of river; the highest concentration of elderly, disabled and vulnerable adults; Europe's busiest airport; a major horse racing stadium and we border the West London oil storage depot. In the last two weeks alone there have been two major fires in the area.

I am writing to ask you to support this event by circulating the details to your residents and by coming along on the day. We are calling on every concerned local resident, every trade union member, every local residents association and political party to march together on 7th December. A united community can achieve anything. Hospitals have been saved by community campaigns, petitions, lobbies and marches - just look at the fantastic campaign to save Lewisham Hospital where over 25,000 people marched and won. We expect this to be a family-friendly event (Fireman Sam outfits optional) open to

everyone who wants to save our fire stations. Make your own banners and placards to carry and bring whistles, drums - anything to make a noise!

If you would like more information please contact me on the above details. I am happy to come and speak to you/your members. The council have already received hundreds of written submissions and petitions arguing against these cuts. The 7th December will be an opportunity for us all to stand and march together to show our opposition.

We are currently printing A5 flyers and A4 posters to advertise the march. If you would like some of these to deliver to your members please let me know as soon as possible how many you will need.

Yours sincerely

Paul Couchman

Secretary, Save Our Services in Surrey