

Defiant Boris Johnson refuses to resign despite Cabinet calls for him to quit amid mass resignations.

He's vowed to fight a fresh no confidence vote.

A defiant Boris Johnson has tonight rejected calls from Cabinet colleagues to quit. According to reports, the Prime Minister told his top ministers that he was prepared to fight another confidence vote in his leadership – a vote the Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps, reportedly told him in person he was unlikely to win.

On a turbulent day inside Downing Street – which has seen seventeen ministers, a line of ministerial aides resign inside 24 hours and the sacking of Michael Gove – a delegation of Cabinet ministers met Mr Johnson at No 10 to urge him to resign, as he haemorrhaged support across the Tory ranks.

There was also a 'pretty strong view' across the powerful 1922 Committee of backbench Tory MPs that the PM should go, one Conservative MP said. Speaking to the PA news agency, David Simmonds, who represents the Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner constituency, said the Prime Minister should go as the 'message has been very clear from colleagues'.

On the 1922 Committee meeting, Mr Simmonds said: "There were a couple of people who would agree with that (that he should not go). Well, there was one person I can think of, but other than that, no, I think it was a pretty strong view across the piece."

Home Secretary Priti Patel, one of his staunchest allies, Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng, Transport Secretary Grant Shapps, Northern Ireland Secretary Brandon Lewis and Welsh Secretary Simon Hart were among the Cabinet ministers telling Mr Johnson to stand down. It's understood Ms Patel spoke to the Prime Minister to convey the "overwhelming view" of the parliamentary party.

Mr Shapps is also thought to have told Mr Johnson that he stood little chance of

winning another confidence vote and should instead set out a timetable for a departure on his own terms. Reports even suggested Nadhim Zahawi, who was only appointed Chancellor on Tuesday, was among those taking part in the showdown with Mr Johnson.

And Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Secretary Michael Gove was sacked by Boris Johnson on Wednesday night after it was reported that the cabinet minister was also among those who told the PM earlier in the day that he must stand down.

But Mr Johnson rejected suggestions he should seek a “more dignified exit” and will instead fight for his political future – something which could trigger further Cabinet resignations.

A source close to the Prime Minister said he told his colleagues there would be “chaos” if he quit and the party would almost certainly lose the next election. The source said Mr Johnson was “continuing to focus on delivering for the public” and addressing the “hugely important issues facing the country”.

He also suggested he could call an early general election if Tory MPs are “crazy” enough to force him out of Number 10.

Neither Mr Shapps nor Mr Zahawi are expected to resign, despite the Prime Minister’s refusal to go.

Allies including Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries and Brexit Opportunities Minister Jacob Rees-Mogg all remained supportive of Mr Johnson. Deputy Prime Minister Dominic Raab also remained loyal to Mr Johnson and defended him at a session of the backbench 1922 Committee.

Sir Graham Brady, chairman of the Conservative 1922 Committee, was thought to have visited Downing Street to communicate the views of backbenchers, following the meeting in Parliament dominated by MPs calling for Mr Johnson to go.

If Mr Johnson refuses to go then his fate will ultimately lie with Tory MPs. If the 1922 Committee’s rules are changed to allow another confidence vote within 12 months.

The committee’s executive did not make any immediate changes to the rules on Wednesday, but has scheduled elections for its executive committee to take place

on Monday, before a result later that evening. The new executive could decide to alter the rules, with Mr Johnson then facing a fresh battle to remain in office.

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