

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Director of Legal & Governance, Graham Britten
Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service
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Louise Harrison
Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive

To: Members of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority

8 October 2025

Dear Councillor

**MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND
PUBLIC**

Please note the content of Page
2 of this Agenda Pack

To contact our Communication
Team, please email
cteam@bucksfire.gov.uk

Your attendance is requested at an **EXTRAORDINARY MEETING** of the **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY** to be held at **THE BLUE LIGHT HUB, 3 THORNBURY, WEST ASHLAND, MILTON KEYNES, MK6 4BB** on **16 OCTOBER 2025** at **2PM** when the business set out overleaf will be transacted.

Yours faithfully

Graham Britten
Director of Legal and Governance

Health and Safety:

There will be limited facilities for members of the public to observe the meeting in person. A recording of the meeting will be available after the meeting.

Chairman: Councillor Monger

Councillors: Adoh, Bailey, Banks, Carroll, Exon, Gomm, Hall, M Hussain OBE, N Hussain, Lancaster, McLean, Priestley, Rouse, Sherwell, Stuchbury and Wilson.



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To observe the meeting as a member of the Press and Public

The Authority supports the principles of openness and transparency. To enable members of the press and public to see or hear the meeting this meeting will be recorded. Please visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWmIXPWAscxpL3vIiv7bh1Q>

The Authority also allows the use of social networking websites and blogging to communicate with people about what is happening, as it happens.

Adjournment and Rights to Speak – Public

The Authority may adjourn a Meeting to hear a member of the public on a particular agenda item. The proposal to adjourn must be moved by a Member, seconded and agreed by a majority of the Members present and voting.

A request to speak on a specified agenda item should be submitted by email to gbritten@bucksfire.gov.uk by 4pm on the Monday prior to the meeting. Please state if you would like the Director of Legal and Governance to read out the statement on your behalf, or if you would like to be sent a 'teams' meeting invitation to join the meeting at the specified agenda item.

If the meeting is then adjourned, prior to inviting a member of the public to speak, the Chairman should advise that they:

- (a) speak for no more than four minutes,
- (b) should only speak once unless the Chairman agrees otherwise.

The Chairman should resume the Meeting as soon as possible, with the agreement of the other Members present. Adjournments do not form part of the Meeting.

Rights to Speak - Members

A Member of the constituent Councils who is not a Member of the Authority may attend Meetings of the Authority or its Committees to make a statement on behalf of the Member's constituents in the case of any item under discussion which directly affects the Member's division, with the prior consent of the Chairman of the Meeting which will not be unreasonably withheld. The Member's statement will not last longer than four minutes. Such attendance will be facilitated if requests are made to enquiries@bucksfire.gov.uk at least two clear working days before the meeting. Statements can be read out on behalf of the Member by the Director of Legal and Governance, or the Member may request a 'team's meeting invitation to join the meeting at the specified agenda item.

Petitions

Any Member of the constituent Councils, a District Council, or Parish Council, falling within the Fire Authority area may Petition the Fire Authority.

The substance of a petition presented at a Meeting of the Authority shall be summarised, in not more than four minutes, by the Member of the Council who presents it (as above). If the petition does not refer to a matter before the Authority, it shall be referred without debate to the appropriate Committee.

Questions

Members of the Authority, or its constituent councils, District, or Parish Councils may submit written questions prior to the Meeting to allow their full and proper consideration. Such questions shall be received by the Monitoring Officer to the Authority, *in writing*, at least two clear working days before the day of the Meeting of the Authority or the Committee.

COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY - TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. To appoint the Authority's Standing Committees and Lead Members.
2. To determine the following issues after considering recommendations from the Executive Committee, or in the case of 2(a) below, only, after considering recommendations from the Overview and Audit Committee:
 - (a) variations to Standing Orders and Financial Regulations;
 - (b) the medium-term financial plans including:
 - (i) the Revenue Budget;
 - (ii) the Capital Programme;
 - (iii) the level of borrowing under the Local Government Act 2003 in accordance with the Prudential Code produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy; and
 - (c) a Precept and all decisions legally required to set a balanced budget each financial year;
 - (d) the Prudential Indicators in accordance with the Prudential Code;
 - (e) the Treasury Strategy;
 - (f) the Scheme of Members' Allowances;
 - (g) the Integrated Risk Management Plan and Action Plan;
 - (h) the Annual Report.
 - (i) The Capital Strategy.
3. To determine the Code of Conduct for Members on recommendation from the Overview and Audit Committee.
4. To determine all other matters reserved by law or otherwise, whether delegated to a committee or not.
5. To determine the terms of appointment or dismissal of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, and deputy to the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, or equivalent.
6. To approve the Authority's statutory pay policy statement.

AGENDA

Item No:

1. Apologies

2. Disclosure of Interests

Members to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests they may have in any matter being considered which are not entered onto the Authority's Register, and officers to disclose any interests they may have in any contract to be considered.

3. Chairman's Announcements

To receive the Chairman's announcements (if any).

4. Petitions

To receive petitions under Standing Order SOA6.

5. Questions

To receive questions in accordance with Standing Order SOA7.

6. Notice of Motion – Cessation of work to cut fire engines and close fire stations through "On Call Improvement Programme"

To consider item 6 **(Pages 7 to 11)**

7. Date of Next Meeting

To note that the next meeting of the Fire Authority will be held on Wednesday 10 December 2025 at 2 pm at The Oculus, The Gateway Offices, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP19 8FF

If you have any enquiries about this agenda, please contact: Katie Nellist (Democratic Services Officer) – Tel: 01296 744633 email: knellist@bucksfire.gov.uk



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY

ROLE DESCRIPTION

LEAD MEMBERS

1. To take a lead role in providing support and constructive challenge to senior officers in the development of strategies and plans and contributing towards the strategic direction of the Authority, within the Authority's overall policy objectives.
2. To act as a 'sounding board' for senior officers on issues within the portfolio, and be supportive in dealing with any problems at a strategic level.
3. To review, in conjunction with senior officers, the service within the portfolio.
4. To keep abreast of related developments and policies at national, regional and local level.
5. To take the lead in reporting to the Authority, one of its committees, or panels on issues within the portfolio.
6. To attend the Overview and Audit Committee, at its request, in connection with any issues associated with the portfolio which is the subject of scrutiny.
7. To act as a spokesperson for the Authority on issues within the portfolio.
8. To represent the Authority on bodies, at events and at conferences related to the portfolio, as appointed by the Executive Committee and to feedback to the Authority any issues of relevance / importance.

(Approved 8 June 2007)

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Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority



NOTICE OF MOTION

Extraordinary Meeting Date: 16 October 2025

NOTICE OF MOTION - CESSATION OF WORK TO CUT FIRE ENGINES AND CLOSE FIRE STATIONS THROUGH "ON CALL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME"

Proposer: Councillor Simon Rouse

Seconder: Councillor Gary Hall

This Authority notes:

- The description of the roles of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Lead Members and Chair of Overview and Audit as set out in the rules governing the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority.
- The powers of the Fire Authority and its committees.
- That the Lead Members and office holders of the Authority, Cllrs Llew Monger (Liberal Democrat Group), Robin Stuchbury (Impact Alliance Group) Tracey Bailey (Labour Group) and Moriah Priestley (Labour Group) and the Chair of Overview and Audit Cllr Stuart Wilson (Impact Alliance Group) were asked in July by officers to “support to progress to public consultation” (quoted from the papers presented) 2 options leading to a reduction in on-call provision of 8 fire engines and the potential closure of 2 stations. This support of the Lead Members and Chair of Overview and Audit was verbally communicated to staff in the briefing that was held in August 2025, a copy of which was shared with all Fire Authority Members. The paper presented to the Members in July explicitly sought, as a meeting objective, their “support to progress to public consultation” on the options.
- It is understood that Lead Member Cllr Niknam Hussain was not in attendance at this meeting but was invited.

- The meeting excluded the Conservative Group Leader and other members of the Executive Committee from the Conservative Group, the largest Group on the Authority.
- No minutes of this meeting in July are publicly available as it was not a formal meeting of the Authority or its committees. Officers have confirmed no minutes were taken.
- That the Full Authority and its committees are the decision making bodies of the Authority. Office holders and Lead Members do not hold decision making powers.
- That these proposals were counter to the strategic direction given to officers by the previous Conservative Group led Executive Committee, in an informal working group meeting on 12th February 2025 to which all Executive Members, of all political groups, were invited. This meeting directed that closure of stations would not be acceptable, that specifically removal of fire engines from Haddenham, Stokenchurch, and Great Missenden would not be acceptable. Furthermore, that any reduction in fire engine cover overall was unlikely to be acceptable without a clear plan to demonstrate an increase in wholetime cover. Officers were also asked to look at an additional wholetime fire engine in Princes Risborough. No further discussions have been held since with the Executive Committee, formally or informally, to change this strategic direction. Proposals were due to be brought back for formal consideration by the Executive Committee or Full Fire Authority.
- That the Liberal Democrat, Labour and Impact Alliance Lead Members and office holders, do not hold roles which permit them to provide support which could have been perceived, by Officers, staff or the general public, as authority to proceed. We do not operate a Cabinet model of governance.
- That staff and pre-public consultation have now concluded.
- That it was also intended for the scope of operational independence to be put to public consultation following discussion between the CFO and the Chairman. This has never been discussed by the Fire Authority or its committees in specific relation to the Buckinghamshire CFO, only in general discussion in responding to Government consultations.

This Authority believes:

- The Lead members and office holders, Cllrs Llew Monger, Tracey Bailey, Niknam Hussain, Robin Stuchbury, Moriah Priestley, Stuart Wilson do not have the authority to be seen to give support for these proposals to be put to staff

and to pre-public consultation without full Fire Authority Approval or its committees.

- These proposals have already damaged public confidence in the Service and caused community concern.
- The proposals to cut fire engines by nearly a third and close 2 stations risk significant damage to public confidence in the Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service and put at risk its perceived ability to protect the public. Such proposals needed careful management through the governance processes of the Authority.
- The Executive Committee or the Full Authority should first have given approval to the substance of the two options, so not to unnecessarily engage staff or the public in options that materially changed fire service cover in the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes area.
- That the full Fire Authority may not agree with these or any proposals to reduce fire engines and close fire stations. There should not be proposals for full public consultation until such time as full consideration has been undertaken of the proposals by Members through its governance structures.
- Given both staff and pre-public consultation have now concluded, these proposals should be considered first by the Executive Committee along with the feedback from the staff, Member and pre-public consultation, in open session, before any paper to proceed to full public consultation is put forward to the Fire Authority. This is in the interests of good scrutiny.
- The nature of operational independence for the Chief Fire Officer is core to the relationship between the Authority and the Service and should be subject to full discussion before any proposals to go to public consultation are proposed to the Fire Authority.
- That the Executive Committee should therefore also consider proposals from the Chief Fire Officer on the scope of operational independence, prior to any proposals to put to full public consultation are presented to the Fire Authority.
- That these issues are solely ones for the Member-led Authority and do not infer any criticism of the Chief Fire Officer or other senior officers. The Chief Fire Officer and other senior officers have at all times operated in good faith, within what they understand to be their authority and to fulfil their obligations to put options for the development of the Service to members.

This Authority instructs:

- The Monitoring Officer to write to all Lead Members and the Chair of Overview and Audit to remind them of the scope of their role under the rules governing the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority.
- That before any proposals to go to the Fire Authority for progression to full public consultation, the Executive Committee should, at its meeting on the 12th November 2025, undertake a detailed review of the original proposals and the feedback from staff, Member and pre-public consultation.
- That this meeting of the Executive Committee should also consider proposals from the Chief Fire Officer in relation to operational independence, prior to any proposals being put forward to the Fire Authority to go to full public consultation.
- That the Extraordinary Fire Authority intended on 12th November 2025 be cancelled, to avoid perception of a pre-determined outcome from this Executive Committee meeting.
- The Fire Authority Chairman to write to all councillors and Members of Parliament in the Service's area of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes to advise of the introduction of a detailed review step by the Executive Committee prior to any proposals for full public consultation being put before the Fire Authority. The text should be as follows with no deviation:

"In July of this year, the Lead Members of the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority - Cllr Llew Monger (Liberal Democrat), Cllr Robin Stuchbury (Impact Alliance), Cllr Tracey Bailey (Labour) and Cllr Moriah Priestley (Labour) and the Chair of Overview and Audit Cllr Stuart Wilson (Impact Alliance) - gave Fire Service officers support to proceed to staff consultation and pre-public consultation on proposals to cut the number of fire engines across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes and close 2 stations in Great Missenden and Stokenchurch. The proposals were due for consideration at a Fire Authority meeting on November 12th 2025.

Following agreement to a motion tabled by the Conservative Group, the full Fire Authority has determined that these matters were solely for either the Executive Committee or full Fire Authority through proper decision-making powers. The Fire Authority has therefore determined that before any proposals for a full public consultation are put before them, the Executive Committee should undertake a detailed review of the original proposals and the feedback from the staff, Member and pre-public consultation. This will be done in open session of the Executive Committee for public transparency. The meeting of the Fire Authority on 12th November 2025 has been cancelled.

On behalf of the Lead Members concerned and the Chair of Overview and Audit, I wish to apologise to the residents of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes for any concern caused in supporting progression of these proposals without them having been considered first within the governance structures of the Authority.

The Monitoring Officer has been instructed by the Fire Authority to remind all Lead Members and the Chair of Overview and Audit of the scope of their roles under the rules governing the Authority.

You may share this communication with any concerned residents.

Cllr Llew Monger

Chairman, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority (Liberal Democrat)"

MOTION ENDS