

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority



EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

Date: Wednesday 12 November 2025

Time: 11.30 am

Venue: The Paralympic Room, Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP19 8FF

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS asked 12 November 2025: WRITTEN RESPONSES (bold)

The Chairman advised there had been seven written questions submitted in advance of the meeting under SOA7 from Councillor Rouse. The questions had been shared with Members and put on the Authority's website. The Chairman advised that a written response would be given in the specified time.

Question 1 – Councillor Rouse asked the Chairman the following supplementary question: Would you join us today in separating the operational independence of the Chief Fire Officer out from On-Call Improvement and bringing a proper paper and proper implications for consideration to the Fire Authority before it was put to the public.

The Chairman responded to Councillor Rouse advising he would give a full written reply in due course.

Written Response:

Separating out the question of operational independence for the CFO would delay this process unnecessarily and require a separate public consultation at additional cost. There will be ample opportunity for comment on this issue during the wider consultation. A report including final proposals on operational independence will come to the Extraordinary Meeting of the full Authority, currently scheduled for 18 March 2026.

Question 2 – Councillor Rouse asked the Chairman the following supplementary question: Why can't you confirm that the public consultation will include an explicit yes or no as to whether the public agrees with the proposal to cut On-Call appliances and critically if the feedback from the public is clear, they do not want these reductions, will the Chairman and will the Chief Fire Officer, withdraw the proposals in March.

The Chairman responded to Councillor Rouse advising that all questions would be considered, it would be highly inappropriate for officer to consider detailed questions when the Authority had yet to give its consent to going to consultation. The questions would be prepared in conjunction with ORS and there would be every opportunity for members of the public to engage and in all cases there would be an opportunity to support the status quo.

Question 3 – Councillor Rouse asked Councillor N Hussain the following supplementary question: Great Missenden Fire Station has a covenant that it must always be a fire station. In the public consultation documents, it does not make it clear to the public that this covenant exists. Can you confirm that it would be added to the public consultation, and can you confirm the basis that the Fire Authority would intend to comply with this covenant, if it proceeds with the closure of Great Missenden.

Councillor N Hussain responded to Councillor Rouse advising no decision had been made and a full written response would be given in due course.

Written Response:

Restrictive covenants are only enforceable by the owner(s) at the relevant time of land which has the benefit of the covenant. If enforceable they can be released or varied by agreement. Failing that, or if indemnity insurance is not obtainable, an application can be made to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) to have the restriction discharged or modified under section 84 of the Law of Property Act 1925. In the event of a closure of the station, disposal by lease or freehold would be a matter for the Executive Committee.

Question 4 – Councillor Rouse asked Councillor N Hussain the following supplementary question: Can you confirm that you have been through the financial assumptions and challenged them with officers and can you explain why there is no detailed supporting business case to the proposals.

Councillor N Hussain responded to Councillor Rouse advising he was not at the 12 July meeting but have had briefings with officers and a full written response would be given in due course.

Written Response:

The financial figures in the consultation proposal provide information on the typical cost of on-call crews, fire engines and stations. I discussed on-call costs (amongst other topics) when I met with the Director of Finance and Assets and the Head of Finance & Assets (Deputy Director) on 18 August 2025.

The figures in the consultation proposal document are based either on actual costs or budgets, an extrapolation of those based on headcount, or in the case of station costs an assessment by specialist consultants. As such, I am content that any assumptions used are valid.

Question 5 – Councillor Rouse asked Councillor Stuchbury the following supplementary question: the question sets out that the Fire Brigades Union made clear it believes the proposal for On-Call service cuts will endanger the public and firefighters, you are the Lead Member for Health and Safety, so will you please confirm that you will therefore now oppose these proposals proceeding to public consultation.

Councillor Stuchbury responded to Councillor Rouse advising that it would be going to consultation it that was agreed, and you will get your answers through the debate.

Question 6 – Councillor Rouse asked the Chairman the following supplementary question: these additional rural firefighting vehicles, can you confirm they were commissioned following the 2022 wildfire review. The investment for them, the ordering for them, took place from memory in 2023/2024 and it's important that the business case taken for those rural firefighting vehicles, at no point were officers seeking to articulate for purchasing them. Can you confirm that these are existing vehicles, not new vehicles, that they were previously ordered and that they were not ordered on the basis of replacing fire engines.

The Chairman responded to Councillor Rouse advising he was correct they were ordered some time ago, but there was a lag time in delivery and not at any point had it been suggested that current On-Call pumps were being removed specifically to be replaced by the rural firefighting vehicles, certainly in terms of placement. However, it was part of a wider reorganisation.

Question 7 – Councillor Rouse asked the Chairman the following supplementary question: if he would consider when members get into the debate, to reflect on, if its passed, if it progressed will you support us extending the consultation period to a 12 week consultation period to properly allow Parish Councils and the public over the Christmas and New Year period to engage.

The Chairman responded to Councillor Rouse advising he would respond in writing in detail, but he was sure it would covered in the debate.

Written Response:

The consultation period of ten weeks makes allowance for the Festive Break in December. This will allow ample time for Town and Parish Councils to prepare submissions. Every effort will be made to make Town and Parish Councils aware of the consultation. It is worth noting that Buckinghamshire Council typically allow six weeks for public consultations as was the case with the recent consultation on the Regulation 18 proposals for the Local Plan for Bucks.