Buckinghamshire
Fire & Rescue Service

ON-CALL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME CONSULTATION: PROPOSAL PACK

A consultation by Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service

Table of Contents

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

At Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service, our focus will always be the safety of our community. We are committed to providing an excellent, modern and agile fire and rescue service for everyone we serve. We are dedicated to having the right people, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time to keep you safe. And together, we will continue to work to protect and safeguard people and places.

Like many other services across the country, we are facing real challenges with our On-Call fire stations and engines. Recruiting and keeping On-Call firefighters is harder than ever. A number of our On-Call fire engines are rarely used, and a small number have not been crewed for years. At the same time, we must make sure that we use public money wisely and adapt to new risks such as extreme weather, new housing and road developments.

This consultation sets out proposals to strengthen and modernise our On-Call service so that it remains reliable, resilient and sustainable. We want to hear your views on these proposals before the Fire Authority makes any final decisions.

Louise Harrison
Chief Fire Officer
Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service

ABOUT OUR SERVICE

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service covers Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, an area of over 800,000 people. We currently have **19 fire stations** and a workforce of around **500 firefighters and support staff**.

Our crews work in two main ways:

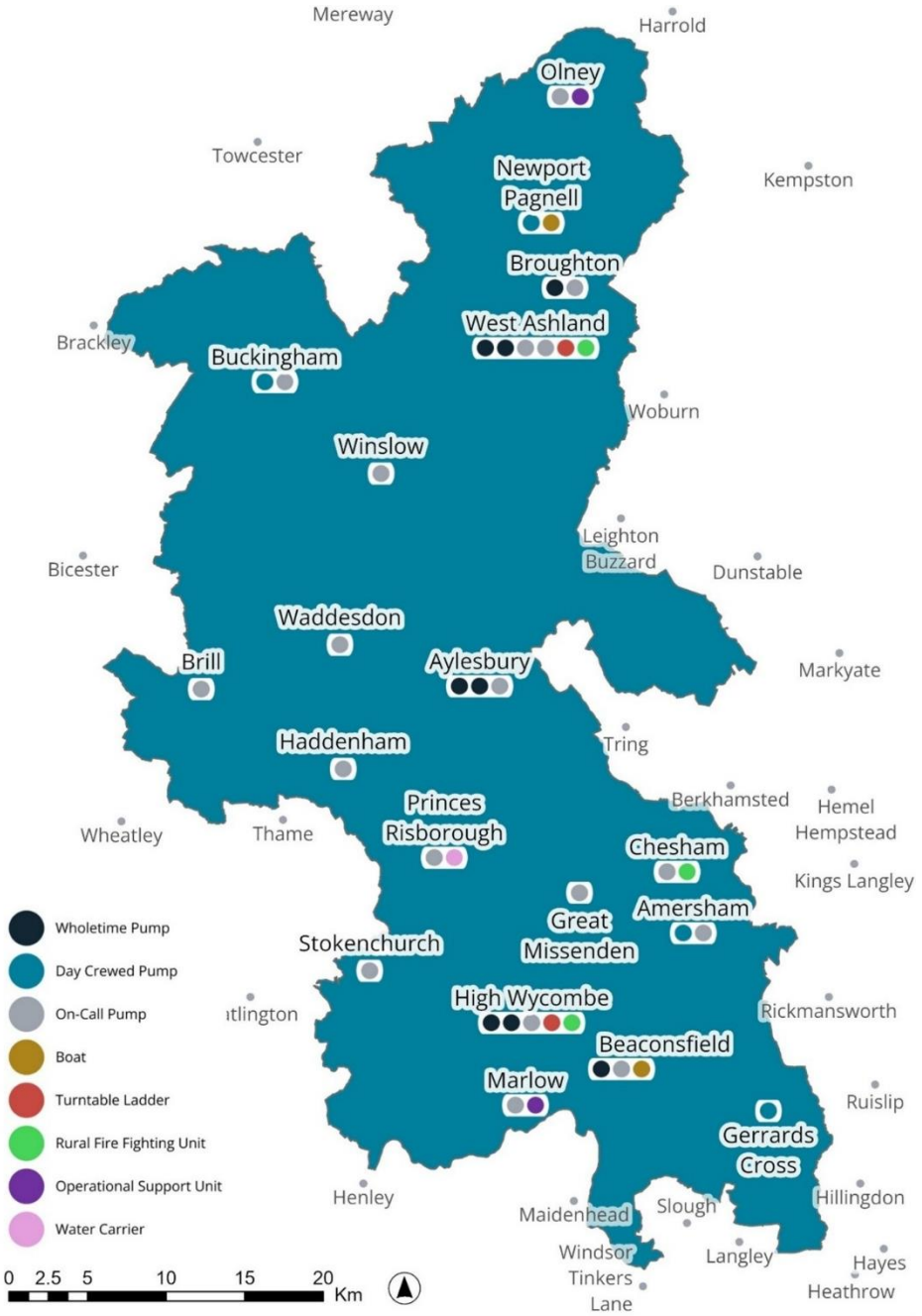
- **Wholetime firefighters** are full-time and based at station on shifts, so their fire engines are always ready to respond.
- **On-Call firefighters** usually have other jobs or responsibilities and respond to the station when there is an emergency.

Together, they crew a fleet of **30 fire engines** and a range of specialist vehicles such as rural firefighting units, water carriers, rescue boats and turntable ladders.

We aim for our first fire engine to arrive at an incident within **10 minutes on average**.

We are proud of the dedication of our staff and the support of our communities. This consultation is part of our ongoing commitment to be open and transparent about how we deliver fire cover, and to involve the public in shaping our future.

Figure A, *Map showing which stations our fire engines and specialist vehicles are currently based at. Please note: Rural Fire Fighting Unit locations at High Wycombe and Chesham are temporary, permanent locations are yet to be confirmed.*



Understanding our demand

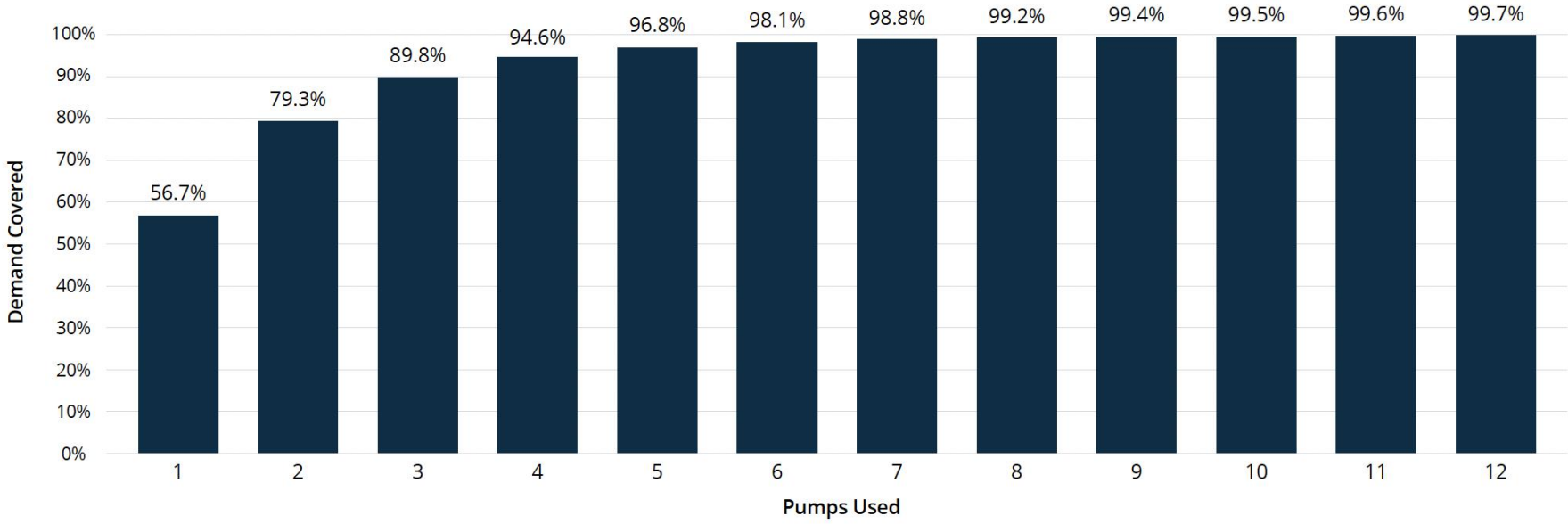
As part of our 2025 - 2030 Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), we reviewed how many fire engines are needed to meet demand.

Our analysis shows that **12 immediately available fire engines is the right number to meet almost all emergencies**, with over **99% of incidents managed by nine or fewer**. Even at busy times, we have only needed around 20 fire engines (a mix of Wholetime and On-Call). In the last five years, there has only been one incident where more than 20 were used simultaneously.

This gives us confidence that we can meet community needs without keeping 30 pumps crewed at all times. The focus is on making sure the fire engines and vehicles we do have are in the right places and ready to respond.

Figure B shows that having 12 pumps available covers 99.7% of our demand in the four years up to 2023. This data was the foundation for building our current CRMP and response model. More recent data continues to confirm the same pattern.

Figure A, *Use of Pumps April 2019 to March 2023*



Planning for exceptional demand

Although most emergencies can be managed with fewer than 20 fire engines, we also plan for those very rare occasions when more are needed.

We do this by:

- **Working as part of a bigger Thames Valley and national network** – if we ever need extra support, we can call on neighbouring services through mutual aid, and we provide the same in return.
- **Sharing a control room with Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire fire and rescue services** – this means we can see all available fire engines across the Thames Valley. The quickest fire engine will always be sent, regardless of which service it belongs to.
- **Keeping additional fire engines available** – some fire engines, that are not normally crewed, are retained for training or reserve use and could be made available in extreme circumstances.

This ensures that even on the rarest of occasions, we can provide the resilience needed to keep our communities safe.

Our specialist vehicles and additional capabilities

We don't just rely on traditional fire engines. We also have a range of specialist vehicles and national support arrangements that make us more resilient when unusual or large-scale emergencies happen.

Our specialist vehicles include:

- **Rural Firefighting Vehicles (RFVs):** smaller, more agile vehicles that can reach remote or off-road areas quickly, especially useful during hot, dry summers when grass or woodland fires are more common.
- **Water Rescue Units and Boats:** for incidents on rivers, waterways and lakes or during flooding.
- **Turntable Ladders:** high-reaching vehicles used to access tall buildings or deliver water from height.
- **Incident Support Units:** vans that carry specialist equipment to major or complex incidents.
- **Water Carriers and Welfare Units:** to provide extra supplies and support for crews at prolonged incidents.
- **Operational Support Unit** - carries extra or specialist equipment which isn't routinely carried on a standard fire engine.

These vehicles allow us to respond more effectively and flexibly, to lessen the number of full-sized fire engines needed. See figure A (pg. 4) for where they are currently in the county.

National resilience

We are proud to host one of only 20 national Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) bases. This national network of fire and rescue services support one another during large-scale or complex emergencies. USAR deals with collapsed buildings and other specialist rescues. Through national resilience we can provide and receive support from the national network when it is needed most.

EASY READ SUMMARY

Why we are asking for your views

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service needs to make changes to how our **On-Call fire engines and fire stations** are organised.

- Recruiting and keeping On-Call firefighters is much harder than it used to be.
- Some of our On-Call fire engines are rarely used, and a small number have not been crewed for years.
- Our communities are changing, new housing developments, an ageing population with more complex needs, busier roads, and the growing risks from climate change and extreme weather all mean we must adapt.
- We must also make the best use of public money.

That is why we are asking for your views.

This programme of work is not designed to cut budgets, reduce firefighter numbers or divert resources from our frontline.

It is important to note these proposals will not cause any reduction to the public safety and protection work we carry out. Interventions relating to fire safety and fire prevention will continue to be undertaken based on risk and vulnerability.

What we are proposing

We are consulting on proposals to:

- Remove some On-Call fire engines that cannot be reliably crewed, replacing some with specialist vehicles that are better matched to local risks and community needs.
- Close two On-Call stations that have not been able to crew a fire engine for many years (Great Missenden and Stokenchurch).
- Base specialist vehicles at the stations that best match local risks and community needs, making it easier to crew them and improving how quickly they can respond.
- Give the Chief Fire Officer more flexibility to make quicker, evidence-based decisions about where resources are based.

Streamlining our On-Call fleet will provide opportunity to reinvest savings back into our On-Call provision and realign resources to improve availability and resilience.

It will enable us to use our budget more effectively and invest where it will have the greatest impact on frontline response and improvement and modernisation of station facilities, vehicles and equipment.

What this means for you

We will still provide strong fire cover across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

99.7% of emergencies can be met with our 12 wholetime fire engines, which are always crewed. Even at times of high demand, we can meet the needs of our communities with 20 fire engines, made up of both Wholetime and On-Call crews. It is very rare that more are needed. As demonstrated in our CRMP, only once in the five year period did we need more than 20 fire engines at the same time.

We have carefully reviewed the impact on the affected communities. These proposals wont negatively impact our ability to meet our response standard and we also expect to see greater resilience for dealing with less frequent, high impact events and incidents. This is because the changes are designed to make sure our On-Call fire engines are more consistently crewed and specialist vehicles are in the right places to respond when needed.

Your views are essential in helping us understand the perspectives from communities before any decisions are made.

Further key points are:

- There will be no **cuts to wholetime fire engines or firefighter numbers**.
- These proposals **only affect On-Call fire engines.**
- Specialist vehicles will be in the right place to respond faster.

How to have your say

We want to hear your views on these proposals. Your feedback will help us understand what matters most to local people and will be considered before the Fire Authority makes any final decisions.

If you would like **more detail on the proposals, including the data and the reasons behind them**, you can find this further on in this pack and in our supporting Evidence Pack.

If you're viewing an electronic copy of this document, you can respond online by following the link below.

Participation is open to anyone (under-16s should be supported by a parent or guardian), including individuals, businesses, public and voluntary organisations, and our own staff. If you're responding on behalf of an organisation, your feedback will be attributed to that organisation.

If you have any questions about the survey, or would like this document or the questionnaire in a different format, please email us at: **OIP@bucksfire.gov.uk**

You can have your say by:

- Completing our online survey at: Bucks Fire On-Call Consultation
- Emailing us at: OIP@Bucksfire.gov.uk
- Writing to us at: BFRS HQ, Stocklake, Aylesbury, Bucks HP20 1BD

The consultation is open until **11.59pm on 28 January, 2026**

WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED

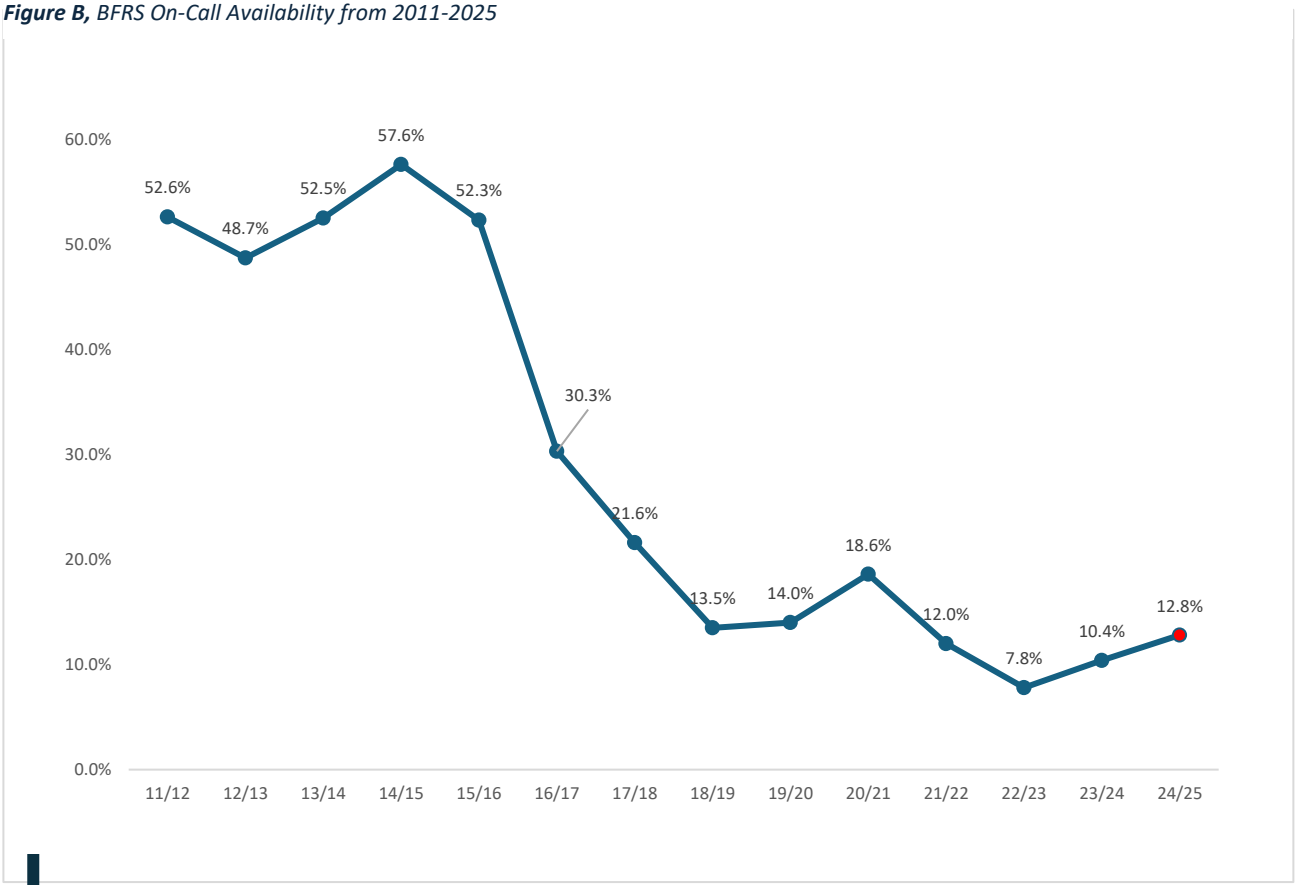
Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service is proud to serve our communities, but we are facing challenges that mean we must look carefully at how we provide cover in the future.

On-Call Fire Engines

Some of our On-Call fire engines are not being used as often as they once were. A number are rarely crewed, and a small number have not been crewed for years. This is mainly because it has become harder to recruit and retain On-Call firefighters, as fewer people live and work close enough to their local fire station to respond when alerted.

Figure C shows how the availability of our On-Call fire engines has fallen sharply over the past decade, from more than 50% in 2011/12 to under 15% in recent years. This means many On-Call fire engines are not crewed when needed.

Figure B, *BFRS On-Call Availability from 2011-2025*



What the data tells us

Over the last decade On-Call fire engines have become less consistently crewed. This is not about demand, but about difficulty recruiting and retaining people who can respond quickly enough. It means that some On-Call fire engines are rarely, if ever, available.

Response times

Across the county, we aim to reach emergencies in **10 minutes on average**. In urban areas this is often quicker, while in more rural areas it can sometimes take longer. Wholetime fire engines are always crewed and ready to respond immediately, giving them the best chance of meeting this target.

On-Call fire engines, however, can only achieve a 10-minute turn-in time around **7% of the time on average**. This figure only reflects the time it takes On-Call firefighters to get to the station and the fire engine leaving. When travel to the incident is added, the majority of these cases will not meet the overall 10-minute response standard.

Figure D shows that our On-Call fire engines are rarely ready to respond to an emergency within 10 minutes, and are much more likely to take longer than 20 minutes, or not be crewed at all.

The data in Figure D was calculated using a different method than in Figure C, so the average availability percentages will differ by 0.3%, deemed to be insignificant.

What the data tells us

On-Call crews remain vital for resilience and support, especially at bigger or longer incidents. However, they cannot be relied upon as the first fire engine at an emergency. This is why we believe changes are needed to how On-Call fire engines are organised, so we can provide more cover where it is needed most.

Figure C, *On-Call Fire Engine Availability in Tax Year 2024/2025*

Available in -	10 minutes	20 minutes	1 hour	3 hours
Broughton	7.5%	0.6%	1.1%	0.2%
Olney	21.9%	0.7%	5.3%	14.5%
West Ashland 1	18.4%	0.5%	1.3%	0.3%
West Ashland 2	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Aylesbury	10.2%	0.3%	0.9%	1.4%
Buckingham	14.9%	0.7%	0.1%	0.1%
Winslow	18.1%	3.6%	6.5%	4.3%
Brill	2.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%
Waddesdon	12.0%	2.7%	10.1%	18.4%
Haddenham	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Amersham	0.7%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Chesham	3.1%	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%
Great Missenden	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
High Wycombe	2.7%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%
Princes Risborough	7.9%	3.8%	7.3%	6.4%
Stokenchurch	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Marlow	8.5%	0.6%	0.4%	0.5%
Beaconsfield	1.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%
Average	7.2%	0.8%	1.9%	2.6%

Changing communities

The risks we face are not the same as they were 10 or 20 years ago. At the same time, an ageing population means we are seeing different risks, from mobility-related rescues to medical emergencies. Climate change is also affecting us, with more grass fires during hot summers and greater risk of flooding during heavy rainfall.

Our work is no longer just about fighting fires. That's why traditional fire engines are not always the right answer for the risks and incidents we face today.

Figure E, Chart Shows Different Incidents Attended

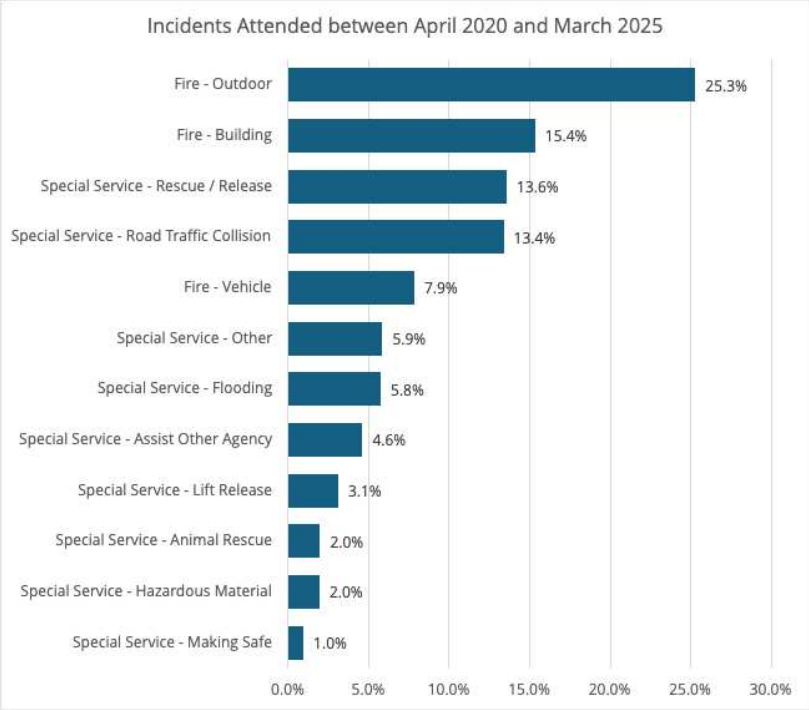
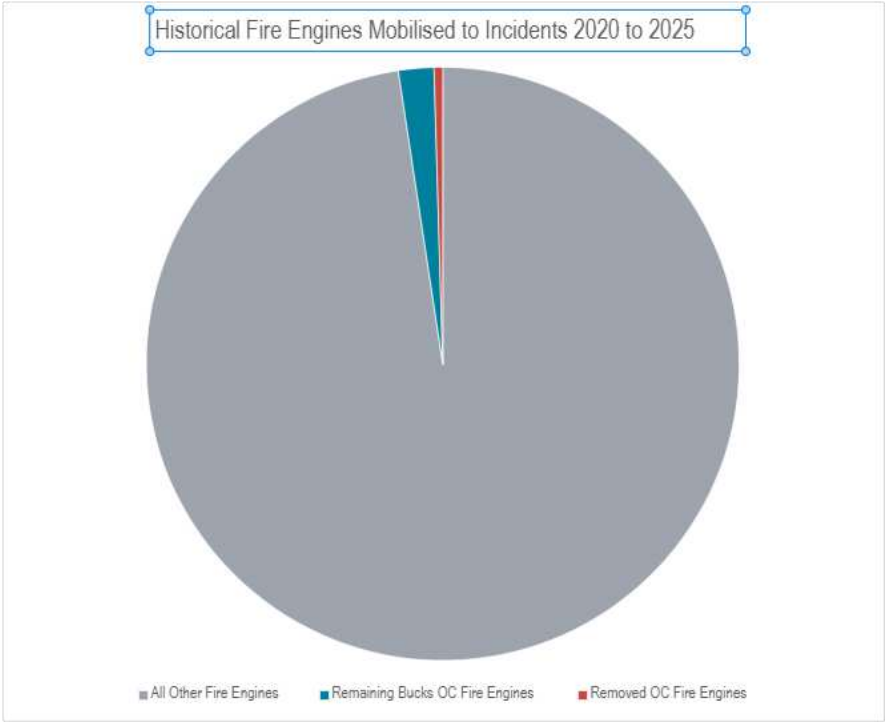


Figure F shows actual On-Call fire engines going to incidents (2020–2025)**.** This chart shows that almost all incidents are attended by immediately available (wholetime) fire engines. On-Call pumps are mobilised much less often.

What the data tells us

The risks faced by our communities are becoming more complex. This means we need to adapt our Service, making sure fire engines, specialist vehicles and crews are placed where they can respond to the risks most likely to happen in the future.

Figure D



Making best use of resources

We have a responsibility to use our people, fire engines, and specialist vehicles in the most effective way. This means:

- Making sure we have the **right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time**.
- Basing **specialist vehicles** (such as turn table ladders and rural firefighting vehicles) at the stations where risk and community need are greatest.
- Reviewing how On-Call fire engines are organised

On-Call firefighting is a national challenge. The traditional On-Call system no longer reflects the way people live today. In many rural areas the pool of potential recruits is small, and across all communities people have less free time to commit. This makes it harder to recruit and retain On-Call firefighters, and to crew every On-Call fire engine. We face the same challenge. Each fire engine must have a minimum of four firefighters, including people with specific skills such as driving and incident command. At the moment, we have more On-Call fire engines than we can regularly crew, which means some vehicles are unavailable even though we still have firefighters in the system.

Figure G shows how often On-Call fire engines are available as 1st line (ready within 10 minutes), 2nd line (within 20 minutes), 3rd line (within 1 hour), or 4th line (up to 3 hours). Stokenchurch and Great Missenden show availability due to two occasions where the fire engines were used for standby activities and training respectively.

This highlights that while we have On-Call fire engines across the county, many of them are not available quickly enough to be the first fire engine at an emergency. Instead, a number are only available after longer periods, meaning they are less reliable for immediate response but still valuable for resilience at larger or extended incidents.

This is **not about cutting the cover we provide or cutting firefighter numbers**. It is about making every fire engine and vehicle count. We are committed to making the best use of our firefighters' skills and **reinvesting in the remaining On-Call stations, training, and firefighter numbers.** This will help improve reliability and strengthen the role of On-Call in our Service, while keeping our ability to scale up when larger or multiple incidents happen.

What the data is telling us

The data shows that only a small proportion of On-Call fire engines are crewed as 1st line and ready to respond within 10 minutes. Most are not available until later, as 2nd, 3rd or 4th line fire engines, which reduces their usefulness for urgent emergencies. This underlines the challenge of relying on the current On-Call system for fast first response.

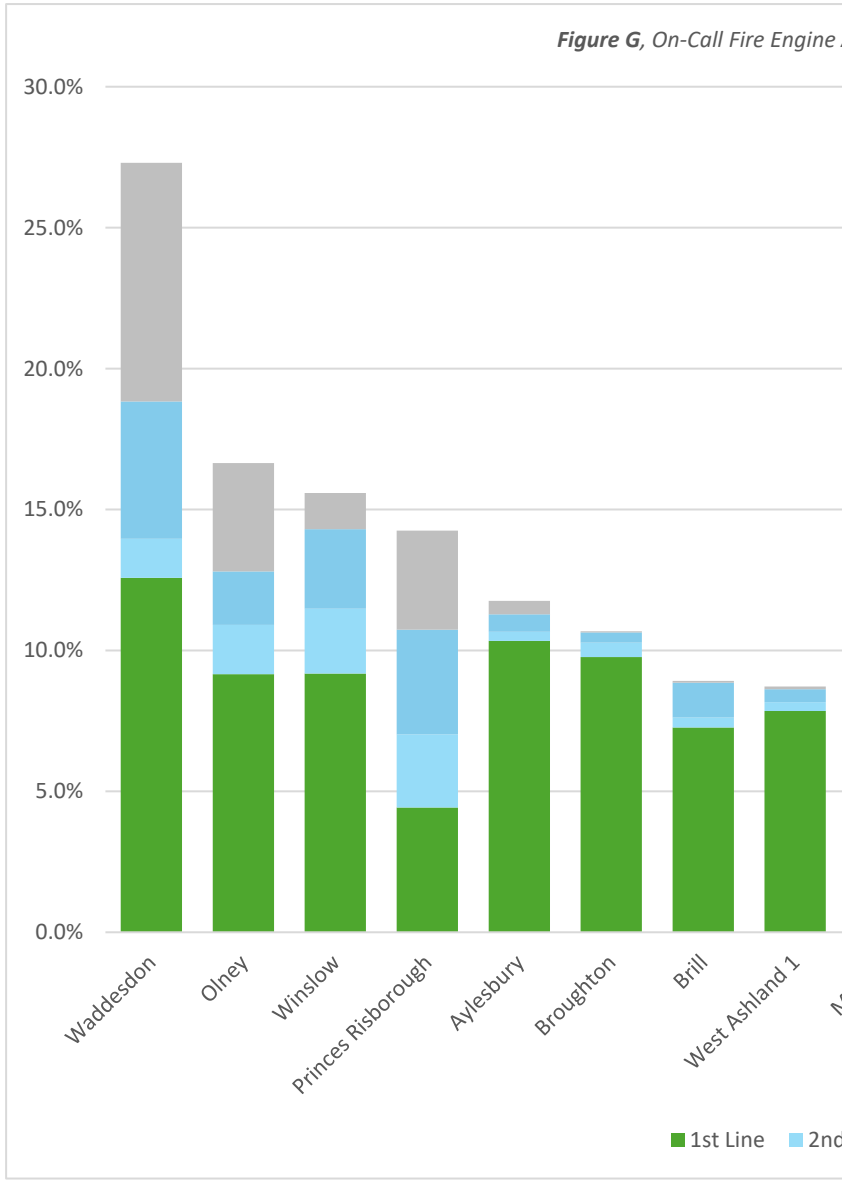


Figure G, On-Call Fire Engine
30.0%
25.0%
20.0%
15.0%
10.0%
5.0%
0.0%
Waddesdon
Olney
Winslow
Princes Risborough
Aylesbury
Broughton
Brill
West Ashland 1
1st Line
2nd

THE PROPOSALS IN DETAIL

We are proposing changes to how some of our On-Call fire engines and stations are organised. A number of On-Call fire engines are rarely crewed, and some not at all, while risks in our communities continue to grow and change.

These proposals are about delivering on our promise:

A modern, agile fire and rescue service with the right people, in the right place, with the right equipment at the right time. Keeping our communities safe.

- Some On-Call fire engines are rarely crewed or used.
- Recruitment and retention of On-Call firefighters is increasingly difficult.
- We need to place crews and vehicles where they are most needed, based on today's risks.
- We want to reinvest resources back into strengthening On-Call provision, so more fire engines are crewed and available when needed.

How we shaped these proposals

We based our proposals on:

- **Data** – response times, appliance use, and local risk.
- **Professional judgement** – drawing on the expertise of senior officers and frontline crews.
- **Early engagement with staff, FA members and the public** – we ran early engagement focus groups and shared information with Fire Authority members to test ideas and gather initial feedback.
- **Public safety and community impact** – the test for every option.

Stations proposed for closure (long-term dormant)

Great Missenden	On-Call fire engine has had **0% On-Call availability** over the past five years. Residents are already covered by nearby wholetime fire engines**,** supported when needed by neighbouring services. The quickest available fire engine is always sent, regardless of county boundaries. Maintaining a non-operational station still incurs ongoing costs. Closing it allows us to reinvest resources into strengthening cover where fire engines are available and needed most. **A detailed review of Great Missenden, including financial and operational analysis, is provided in the Evidence Pack (see page 39).**	Our analysis shows this change **will not slow down** fire engine response times
Stokenchurch	On-Call fire engine has had **0% On-Call availability** over the past five years. Residents are already covered by nearby wholetime fire engines**,** supported when needed by neighbouring services. The quickest available fire engine is always sent, regardless of county boundaries. Maintaining a non-operational station still incurs ongoing costs. Closing it allows us to reinvest resources into strengthening cover where fire engines are available and needed most. **A detailed review of Stokenchurch, including financial and operational analysis, is provided in the Evidence Pack (see page 45).**	Our analysis shows this change **will not slow down** fire engine response times

Stations affected by removal or replacement of On-Call fire engines

A full review of all stations listed below in alphabetical order, including financial implications, staffing figures and demand modelling, is set out in the evidence pack (see page 31).

Amersham	Remove 1 On-Call fire engine Replace with Rural Firefighting Vehicle	• Current On-Call availability has been consistently low • Will not reduce our ability to meet response standards, either across the Service or locally. • Amersham would gain a Rural Firefighting Vehicle, providing important specialist capability for tackling grass and woodland fires. On-Call staff could be redeployed to Chesham to strengthen crewing and improve fire engine availability there.	Our analysis shows this change **will not slow down** fire engine response times
Beaconsfield	Remove 1 On-Call fire engine Replace with Crew Welfare Unit	• Current On-Call availability has been consistently low. • Will not reduce our ability to meet response standards, either across the Service or locally. • Beaconsfield would gain a Crew Welfare Unit, improving resilience by providing dedicated support for firefighters at incidents.	Our analysis shows this change **will not slow down** fire engine response times
Buckingham	Remove 1 On-Call fire engine Replace with Rural Firefighting Vehicle	• Current On-Call availability has been consistently low. • Will not reduce our ability to meet response standards, either across the Service or locally. • A Rural Firefighting Vehicle would provide important specialist capability, and Buckingham is well placed for this. • On-Call staff could also support Winslow through a tiered response, improving its availability.	Our analysis shows this change **will not slow down** fire engine response times
High Wycombe	Remove 1 On-Call fire engine	• Current On-Call availability has been consistently low. • Will not reduce our ability to meet response standards, either across the Service or locally. • Existing On-Call staff could be used to support the crewing of the Turntable Ladder and provide tiered response to neighbouring stations such as Marlow and Princes Risborough.	Our analysis shows this change **will not slow down** fire engine response times

West Ashland	Replace 1 On-Call fire engine with new Water Carrier Move Rural Firefighting Vehicle to Broughton	• The second On-Call fire engine is not used or required. • Will not reduce our ability to meet response standards, either locally or across the Service. • West Ashland will retain one On-Call fire engine, and with staff focused on this unit its availability is expected to improve. • Staff can instead help improve availability of the remaining On-Call fire engine. • Taking account of Milton Keynes' growth, the relocation of the Rural Firefighting Vehicle to Broughton, alongside stronger On-Call availability, will mean a better and more resilient service across the city.	Our analysis shows this change **will not slow down** fire engine response times

Important reassurance

In some places, we may make better use of our On-Call firefighters by focusing them across fewer fire engines, or by introducing specialist vehicles that require smaller crews. This means the crews we have are ready when you need them most.

Operational Independence

Why this matters

Every emergency is different, and our ability to respond quickly depends on having the right people, vehicles, and equipment in the right place at the right time.

At present, many operational decisions, such as redeploying fire engines, require approval from the Fire Authority. This can create delays when swift action is needed.

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has recommended giving Chief Fire Officers greater operational independence. This would allow them to make strategic decisions about resources more quickly, while the Fire Authority retains oversight and accountability.

What operational independence would mean

Granting the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) greater operational independence would enable evidence-based decisions to be made

more swiftly on matters such as fleet deployment, staffing, and equipment. **For example:**

- If an On-Call station was struggling to recruit crew, the CFO could temporarily redeploy that fire engine to a different station, while replacing it with a specialist vehicle needing fewer firefighters.

Clear accountability

Operational independence would not reduce the accountability of the Fire Authority. Instead, responsibilities would be clearly defined.

Fire Authority responsibilities

- Setting Service priorities
- Approving budgets and council tax
- Setting response standards
- Appointing or dismissing the Chief Fire Officer
- Opening and closing fire stations would remain a Fire Authority decision, with operational input from the CFO.

Chief Fire Officer responsibilities

- Allocation of staff
- Organisation and deployment of resources
- Managing operational needs
- Expenditure within delegated limits

What we are proposing

We are asking for your views on giving the CFO greater operational independence. **This would:**

- Allow faster, evidence-led decisions to meet changing risks
- Ensure resources are matched more effectively to community needs
- Retain strong Fire Authority governance and accountability.

BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSALS

These proposals are designed to give Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes a fire and rescue service that is modern, agile, and better matched to today's risks. They will help us make the most of our people and equipment, while keeping communities safe.

The key benefits are:

- **More availability where it counts** – by focusing firefighters across fewer fire engines and placing specialist vehicles where they are most needed, more vehicles will be crewed and ready to respond when you call.
- **Improved resilience** – stronger cover during peak demand and major incidents, such as wildfires, flooding, or large-scale emergencies.
- **Specialist skills and equipment** – introducing or moving Rural Firefighting Vehicles, Welfare Units, and other specialist vehicles ensures we can deal more effectively with new and emerging risks.
- **A sustainable, modern service** – instead of spreading resources thinly, we concentrate investment on the vehicles, equipment, and stations that communities rely on most.

- **Firefighter wellbeing** – dedicated welfare support for crews at longer incidents, and improved facilities across the Service.
- **Quicker, evidence-led decisions** – greater operational independence for the Chief Fire Officer means we can adapt more swiftly as risks change.
- **Value for money** – making sure public funding goes further by matching resources to risk and reinvesting savings into strengthening On-Call availability.

Impact on response times

We know people want to understand what these changes mean for emergency response. That's why we tested different scenarios using detailed modelling.
The key finding is clear:

- Compared to a **theoretical best case** (all 18 On-Call fire engines crewed and ready, which we know is not realistic), our proposal shows only a very small difference, averaging **around 8 seconds slower**.
- But compared to the **more realistic picture today**, where many On-Call engines are not available, our proposal performs much better, with average improvements of **around 34 seconds faster**.

This means the **upward benefit outweighs the downward risk**, because concentrating resources on fewer, better-staffed appliances gives us more reliable cover. The full station-by-station modelling is published in the **Evidence Pack**.

HAVE YOUR SAY

This is your chance to tell us what you think about our proposals. Your feedback is vital and will help the Fire Authority make the final decision.

Who can take part

The consultation is open to **everyone**, whether you live, work, or travel through Buckinghamshire or Milton Keynes. There are no age limits, although responses from under-16s should be supported by a parent or guardian. We want to hear from residents, businesses, partner organisations, and anyone with an interest in how we keep our communities safe.

How to take part

- **Online:** Complete our consultation survey at Bucks Fire On-Call Consultation.
- **Paper copy:** Printed surveys are available on request – call 01296 744400 or email OIP@bucksfire.gov.uk
- **Alternative formats:** If you need the consultation in another format (for example, large print, easy read, or translated into another language), please contact us and we will provide it.
- **In person:** We will also be holding community events across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes where you can find out more and share your views. Details will be published on our website and social media.

What happens next

All responses will be collected, analysed, and presented to the Fire Authority. Your views, alongside the evidence in this pack and the supporting Evidence Pack, will help shape the final decision.

The consultation closes 11.59pm on **28 January, 2026.** Please make sure you have your say before then.

GLOSSARY

Appliance – Another word for a fire engine or specialist fire vehicle.

Availability – The percentage of time a fire engine is crewed and ready to respond to an emergency.

Chief Fire Officer (CFO) – The most senior officer in Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service, responsible for leading the Service and making operational decisions.

Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) – A five-year plan setting out how the Service will assess and manage risks across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

Crew Welfare Unit – A specialist vehicle providing facilities such as rest, refreshments, and toilets to support firefighters during long or challenging incidents.

First pump / second pump – The first or second fire engine sent to an incident.

Mutual aid – An arrangement where fire services share resources and support one another during large or simultaneous emergencies.

National resilience – The ability of UK fire services to provide and receive specialist support during national emergencies, such as large fires, terrorist attacks, or natural disasters.

On-Call firefighter – A trained firefighter who usually has another job but responds to emergencies when available, normally from home or work near their station.

On-Call fire engine (On-Call pump) – A fire engine crewed by On-Call firefighters rather than full-time (Wholetime) firefighters.

Operational independence – The ability for the Chief Fire Officer to make quicker, evidence-based decisions about staff, vehicles, and resources, while the Fire Authority retains oversight.

Operational Support Unit (OSU) – A van carrying specialist equipment for use at complex or large incidents.

Resilience – The ability of the Service to deal with multiple, long-lasting, or large-scale emergencies.

Response time – The time taken for a fire engine to arrive at an incident after being called. The Service aims for the first fire engine to arrive within 10 minutes on average.

Specialist vehicles – Vehicles designed for specific types of incidents, such as Turntable ladder platforms, water rescue boats, or welfare units.

Wholetime firefighter – A firefighter employed full-time, permanently based at a station, and always available to respond immediately.

Wholetime fire engine – A fire engine that is always crewed by Wholetime firefighters, providing 24/7 cover.