

# BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY



## QUESTION TIME/PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT MEETINGS

### ***The Scheme***

Since its meeting on 8 June 2000, the Combined Fire Authority (the Authority) has included provision on its Agenda for questions to be put to Members of the Authority relevant to the work of the Authority, whether or not that subject is specifically covered on the Agenda Papers. This scheme was initially operated on a pilot basis and has been incorporated into the Authority's Standing Order following a review in April 2001.

### ***Who can participate?***

Questions /comments can be put by any member of the public – individuals, representatives of Town and Parish Councils, Community Liaison Forums, Urban Community Councils or voluntary and other external organisations, including businesses.

(Questions will not normally be accepted from employees of the Authority as they have sufficient channels of communication, both internally and through their representative bodies).

### ***How long will be allowed?***

Up to fifteen minutes will be allowed in total for questions/comments.

### ***How will the scheme operate?***

1. Speakers will be invited on a first come first served basis. Anyone wishing to speak may either write in advance to the Clerk to outline his or her question or statement, or talk to the Clerk before the meeting starts. They will be asked to complete a form summarising their question or statement, which will be passed to the Chairman.
2. Questions/statements should relate to the Authority's responsibilities and affect Bedfordshire or Luton.
3. The Chairman may invite each speaker to address Members of the Authority in order that they may be clearly identified and hear better. Questions or statements should be directed to the Chairman.
4. Each person will be able to ask up to two questions (subject to paragraph 5 below) but will be limited to a maximum of three minutes in which to do so. The Clerk will time each speaker to ensure that s/he does not exceed three minutes. If a speaker continues for longer the Chairman will ask him/her to stop. No more than three speakers will normally be permitted per subject at a meeting (subject to the Chairman's discretion).

5. The Chairman will deal with the question/statement or request that an appropriate Member (or Officer) reply orally. It is open to the Chairman to decide whether the questioner should have the opportunity to seek clarification of the reply or ask one supplementary question.
6. Any questioner who attends but does not receive a response through lack of time will be sent a written reply within five working days after the meeting.
7. The Chairman will stop persons from speaking at any time if s/he considers the question or statement to:
  - be defamatory or improper.
  - be outside the responsibilities of the Authority.
  - relate to the performance or employment of individual Authority and/or Service staff.
  - concern a matter in which a right of appeal or review exists.
  - concern a matter which is 'confidential or 'exempt' business including individual cases under investigation or sub-judice and allegations of crime or individual complaints against employees.

***When does the Combined Fire Authority meet?***

The following meetings have been arranged for 2010/11:

Wednesday 30 June 2010 Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters

Thursday 9 September 2010 Dunstable Community Fire Station, Dunstable

Friday 10 December 2010 Dunstable Community Fire Station, Dunstable

Thursday 10 February 2011 Dunstable Community Fire Station, Dunstable

Tuesday 12 April 2011 Dunstable Community Fire Station, Dunstable

All meetings commence at 10 am

***Who shall I contact?***

Queries may also be directed to Tony Richardson, Administration Manager, Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service, Southfields Road, Kempston, Bedford MK42 7NR (telephone 01234 845027).

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**REQUEST TO SPEAK OF MEETINGS OF BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON  
COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY**

*Please complete this form and return it to:*

- *Tony Richardson, Administration Manager, Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service, Southfields Road, Kempston, Bedford MK42 7NR*

I wish to speak at the meeting of the Bedfordshire and Luton Combined Fire Authority on  
(insert date of meeting).

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I wish to ask the following question / make the following statement:

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Capacity in which speaking: (e.g. personal or representative of an external organisation, etc.)

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Name	
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Address	
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Tel No.	
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Date	
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