



Draft Minutes of the Dorset Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee held at 10:00am on 20 November 2025 at the Poundbury offices, Conference Room, Peverell Avenue West, Poundbury, Dorset

These are draft minutes to be approved by the Dorset LPS Committee at their next meeting.

Members present:

Cllr Duncan Sowry-House (Chair)

Cllr Laura Beddow

Cllr Richard Biggs

Officer attendance:

Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO), Director of Safety and Compliance, Dave Waters

Area Manager (AM), Bradley Stevens

Group Manager (GM), Dave Adamson

Democratic Services Officer, David Shaw

25/19 Welcome

25/19.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Members and officers.

25/20 Apologies

25/20.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Byron Quayle

25/21 Code of Conduct, Declaration of Interests

25/21.1 The Chair asked the meeting for any disclosures of pecuniary interests under the Localism Act. There were no disclosures.

25/22 Public Questions

25/22.1 There were no members of the public present and no public questions had been received.

25/22.2 RESOLVED: Members noted that there were no public questions.

25/23 Review and approve minutes of the Dorset Local Performance and Scrutiny (LPS) meeting on 21 August 2025

25/23.1 The Chair asked Members to review and approve the minutes from the previous meeting.

25/23.5 RESOLVED: That the minutes be confirmed and be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

25/24 Action Progress Report

25/24.1 The Democratic Services Officer reported that no actions had been taken at the meeting on 21 August 2025 and that there were none outstanding from previous meetings.

25/24.2 RESOLVED: Members noted that there were no actions outstanding.

25/25 Performance monitoring and briefing quarter 2

25/25.1 Area Manager (AM), Bradley Stevens and Group Manager (GM) Dave Adamson presented to Members the Performance Monitoring and Briefing for quarter 2, which covered the three priority areas overseen by this Committee:

Priority 1 Help you to make safer and healthier choices

Priority 2 Protect you and the environment from harm, and

Priority 3 Be there when you need us.

A link to the presentation can be found [here](#).

It was explained to the Committee that Performance Monitoring and Briefing would be in future presented to Members in a new format. A performance dashboard for each of the priority areas would be presented supported by a presentation of the highlights of the service provision for the quarter. The data for year to date referred to quarter 2 – 31 July to 30 September and was compared with the corresponding quarter in the previous year. When necessary, officers would provide additional detail to the committee on an exception basis. It was clarified that the data presented was in Minutes and Seconds and now included a five-year history, as previously requested by Members. The quarterly data was discussed as set out in the dashboard.

25/25.2 **Priority 1 - Help you to make safer and healthier choices.**

25/25.3	Title	Current Year-to-Date	Last Year-to-Date
	Number of accidental dwelling fires - Dorset Council	38	36
	Number of home fire safety visits Quarterly – Dorset Council	515	Not Applicable
	Number of safeguarding referrals from DWFRS- Dorset Council	59	Not Applicable

25/25.4 The Officers reported that there had been a slight increase in response times to domestic properties with a sleeping risk and the possible reasons for this were explained to Members. The reasons would be given consideration to seek improvements. It was noted that calls to HM Prison Guys Marsh accounted for a substantial number of responses that were outside of target response times and liaison was continuing with the prison authorities to reduce the number of calls requiring a response.

25/25.5 Arising out of consideration for the dashboard data for Priority 1, Members asked the following questions which were answered by the officers.

25/25.6 In considering the data presented on accidental dwelling fires, the Committee were agreed that its interpretation would be enhanced by the inclusion of a mean trend line and annotations to help explain the data.

25/25.7 The Chair referred to the number of deliberate fires in Quarter 2 and the work of the Police in supporting the Service and seeking arrests.

25/25.8 The Chair spoke of the use of drones and welcomed the use by the Service of drones operated by Wessex Search and Rescue. AM Stevens commented that due to costs the Service would look to share the use of drones to achieve the best value for money.

25/25.9 Cllr Laura Beddow and the Chair mentioned the role of social media in deliberate fires, including the setting of group challenges within teenage gangs. The Chair spoke of the good work that was carried out by Beaten Over, community drama group, who visited schools to deliver messaging about coercion of younger teenagers. The Chair observed that Parish and Town Councils had finance to be involved in such projects. Following further debate, it was agreed as an action for the Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) to consider the influence of social media in deliberate fires.

25/25.10 **ACTION: That the LRFs be requested to consider the influence of social media in deliberate fires.**

25/25.11 The Officers provided additional detail on their work with Go Drive, that had replaced the Safe Drive Stay Alive education programme, aimed at reducing Road Traffic Collisions. It was reported that the numbers of RTCs had increased recently along with their seriousness, including fatalities. It was agreed as an action that Members be invited to a Go Drive presentation, once dates had been agreed.

25/25.12 **ACTION: That Members be invited to a future Go Drive presentation.**

25/25.13 The Chair referred to communications related to Home Fire Safety visits (formerly Safe and Well). It was commented that it might be problematic for recipients of visits to be assured that the visit was genuine and from an authorised officer of the Service. The officers explained that appointments were prearranged, and telephone numbers could be verified with Fire Control. It was agreed as an Action to liaise with Communications as to how the identity of a DWFRS visitor could be better identified to establish their authenticity. Cllr Beddow added that the contribution of the Fire Service was welcomed by other partner organisations in keeping an individual safe.

25/25.14 **ACTION: That the Officers liaise with Communications to seek means for the identity of a DWFRS visitor to be better identified to establish their authenticity.**

25/25.15 The Officers also outlined the attendance of senior officers at events. It was commented that in a wider context there was insufficient officers to attend all events that they were requested to attend and events that had the most value to local people and the Service were prioritised.

25/25.16 **Priority 2 - Protect you and the environment from harm**

25/25.17

Title	Current Year-to-Date	Last Year-to-Date
Automatic fire alarms which result in a false alarm Quarterly - Dorset Council	345	322
Automatic fire alarms which result in a false alarm - non domestic premises - Dorset Council (year to date)	67	112
Number of business fire safety checks undertaken crews - Dorset Council	48	Not Applicable

25/25.18 The Officers explained that the reduction in Automatic fire alarms which result in a false alarm - non domestic premises over the last year was due

to the success of call-challenge operated by Fire Control. Reference was also made to the work of the prevention team and the additional burden of conducting business fire safety checks on medium rise buildings, of which there could be as many as 15,000 – 20,000 in the Service’s area. Fire crews would be asked to assist with basic fire safety building inspections. The officers added that the Service may become a statutory consultee on Battery Energy Storage Site (BESS) planning applications, which would be an additional task.

- 25/25.19 **Priority 3 - Be there when you need us**
- 25/25.20 The quarterly data for Priority 3 was discussed as set out in the dashboard. The officers referred to the number of serious RTCs on the A35 between Dorchester and Bridport, including fatalities. This had impacted on Bere Regis Fire Station. The role of the Collision Investigation Team was explained, including reporting back to crews that had attended serious collisions. Members spoke of the cutting back of kerbside vegetation to reduce strobing effects and the high amounts of deer on the roads at night.
- 25/25.21 The officers updated the Committee on the competency of staff. It was noted that the numbers of drivers qualified to drive on blue lights had increased following changes in driving qualification procedures. The use of Body Cameras for the assessment of training was also explained, including providing evidence from real life incidents.
- 25/25.22 Details were provided of an on-call Fire Fighter from the Christchurch area who also was involved in demolition as part of his other employment. Crews had been involved in staging controlled fires within buildings earmarked to be demolished to provide realistic training, for example in the use of breathing apparatus and incident command. The training was also valuable for new recruits and members of the local community were also made aware.
- 25/25.23 Members welcomed the use of buildings to be demolished for fire training and the opportunity to be invited to the next training event. It was also agreed as an action to consider the on-call firefighter who had started the initiative to be considered for an award at the Annual Awards Ceremony.
- 25/25.24 **ACTION: That the on-call firefighter who had started the demolition training initiative be considered for an award at the Annual Awards Ceremony and that Members be invited to observe such a training event.**

25/25.25 **Demand summary**

25/25.26	Title	Current Year-to-Date	Last Year-to-Date
	Number of fires attended - Dorset Council	336	226
	Number of special services incidents attended - Dorset Council	335	677
	Number of incidents attended which turned out to be false alarms - Dorset Council	507	424

25/25.27 The quarterly data for the Demand Summary was discussed as set out in the dashboard. There were no Member questions arising

25/25.28 **Presentation**

25/25.29 Group Manager(GM) Dave Adamson provided a presentation on the Service's engagement in quarter 2. This included community engagement, exercises attended, notable incidents attended, training exercises and multi-agency exercises. Details were provided on the on the various heathland fires that had taken place in July and August 2025, including the Major Incident at Holt Heath.

25/25.30 The officers answered questions from the Chair on the costs of the Major Incident and whether a more specific Fire Fighter uniform could have been used when fighting wildfires. The officers replied that this would be kept under review in the forthcoming procurement exercise when considering potential enhancement over the regular issue uniform and the costs involved. It was noted that there could be specialist uniform to varying incidents, including structural and water and capacity for storage within stations and upon appliances was an additional consideration. Fire Fighters had two uniforms as part of standard issue, so that one could be cleaned, with a laundry company based in Bristol being used.

25/25.31 The Chair thanked the officers for the presentation.

25/25.32 RESOLVED: Members scrutinised and noted the performance for quarter 2 2025.

25/26 Matters raised by Members (agreed with the Chair)

25/26.1 There were no further matters raised with the Chair.

25/27 Date of Next Meeting

25/27.1 The Chair confirmed the date of the next Dorset Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee meeting as 19 February 2026 at 10:00am at Conference Room at the Poundbury offices, Peverell Avenue West, Poundbury, Dorset.

The meeting closed at 11:25

Signed: _____