



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

**Minutes of the Swindon Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee held at
10:00am on 26 February 2025 at Westlea Fire Station, The Chesters, Stonehill
Green, Westlea, SN5 7DB**

Members present:

Cllr Abdul Amin (Chair)

Cllr Kevin Small

Cllr Paul Oatway (Chair of the Authority)

Officer attendance:

Temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer (TACFO) - Director of Community Safety, Marc House

Area Manager (AM) Response, Darren Langdown

Group Manager (GM), Dave Slawinski

District Commander District 1, Martin Lay

Democratic Services Officer, David Shaw

25/01 Welcome

25/01.1 Cllr Abdul Amin welcomed Members and officers to the meeting. It was noted that in the absence of Cllr Matthew Courtliff, Cllr Paul Oatway was present and that in accordance with Committee's terms of reference (Section 2.4 of the Members' Handbook refers) the meeting was quorate.

25/02 Apologies

25/02.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Matthew Courtliff.

25/03 Code of Conduct and Declarations of Interests

25/03.1 The Chair asked the meeting for any disclosures of pecuniary interests under the Localism Act. There were no disclosures.

25/04 Public Questions

25/04.1 There were no members of the public present and no public questions had been received.

25/05 Review and approve minutes of the Swindon Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 27 November 2024

25/05.1 The Chair asked Members to review and approve the minutes from the last meeting.

25/05.2 RESOLVED: That the minutes be confirmed without amendment and be signed by the Chair as an accurate record.

25/06 Action Progress Report

26/06.1 The Democratic Services Officer reported that no actions had been taken at the meeting on 27 November 2024 and that there were none outstanding from previous meetings.

25/06.2 RESOLVED: Members noted that there were no actions outstanding.

25/07 Performance monitoring and briefing quarter 3

25/07.1 Area Manager (AM) Darren Langdown presented to Members the performance monitoring and briefing for quarter 3, which covered the three priority areas overseen by this Committee:

25/07.2 **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 is [here](#).

25/07.3 **Priority 1 - Help you to make safer and healthier choices.**

25/07.4 AM Langdown highlighted the value of partnership working, including the Swindon Community Safety Partnership, the Harbour Project, The Prevent Board, Channel, Clear, Hold, Build, the Swindon Safeguarding Partnership and the Local Resilience Forums (LRFs). Group Manager (GM), Dave Slawinski and District Commander District 1, Martin Lay provided additional local detail.

25/07.5 The Chair referred to the benefit of establishing community links with the Swindon City of Sanctuary and Cllr Kevin Small mentioned a revised approach of government funding for homelessness, with 49% of funding now allocated to address the causes of homelessness. GM Slawinski added that it was advantageous to establish good community links in the Swindon area as there were three wholetime stations which facilitated visits to community events. Temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer (TACFO) Marc House and

AM Langdown mentioned that community liaison had to add value to the Service and also that the effectiveness of liaison was captured and recorded. The community leaders' contact details were available to crews through station risk profiles and community maps. It was noted that the Clear, Hold, Build initiative was being considered to be extended to other districts of Swindon to improve confidence in those areas. In reply to a question from the Chair, GM Slawinski explained how feedback from meetings with community leaders was relayed back to community groups so that it was collaborative and cohesive. Cllr Oatway asked that the appreciation of the Committee be recorded for the excellent community work that was being undertaken.

- 25/07.6 AM Langdown reported that the availability of on-call appliances was 70.07% and 99.40% for wholetime. The officers explained that there were a number of initiatives to improve on-call availability. These included a review of current on-call staff contracts of availability; succession planning to maintain availability and support recruitment and targeted recruitment campaigns. Twelve stations had now undertaken on call contract reviews which would help to understand the position, gather data and achieve alignment of contracts with service requirements.
- 25/07.7 The operational competencies of staff were good and in line with corporate targets.
- 25/07.8 AM Langdown drew attention to the social media activity which was aligned to the National Fire Chiefs Council campaigns, for example regarding Christmas, smoke alarm testing and electrical safety. Other national campaigns included Older People's Day, Grandparents' Day, candle safety week, Halloween, Diwali, bonfire night and CO awareness. The key prevention safety messages were shared across various social media platforms and had reached 512,743 users. The most seen post on Facebook was regarding air fryers and was viewed by 121,926 people. In reply to a question from Cllr Small, AM Langdown stated that Swindon Council's housing team were aware of the Safe and Well team's provision on CO prevention. The Chair explored the relationship between funding prevention work and preventing fires. TACFO House explained that prevention work was now more targeted.
- 25/07.9 Details were provided on the number of road safety and education inputs in quarter 3. In the quarter, 3,284 children and young people had received educational input, comprising 2,929 via their main education provider and 335 via other education. In reply to a question from Cllr Small, the officers informed the meeting that there were bespoke educational packages for different syllabuses, including ones for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) schools and that all school visits were evaluated and followed up. There were nine new firesetter referrals in the quarter and there were eight other cases currently open.
- 25/07.10 AM Langdown highlighted that the Safe Drive Stay Alive road safety campaign was being replaced by the Go Drive programme, which was a

national campaign. The Go Drive programme would be independently validated and scrutinised.

- 25/07.11 AM Langdown stated that the Survive the Drive road safety campaign aimed at armed forces personnel had ceased due to the Ministry of Defence changing their delivery and funding model. Cllr Oatway stated that he would bring this to the attention of Chief Fire Officer, Andy Cole, to make representation for the training to recommence.
- 25/07.12 There were 303 safe and well visits carried out in quarter 3, which was a decrease of 7.9% from the same quarter in the previous year. Safe and well visits were now more targeted. A total of 15 Safeguarding referrals were also submitted within the Swindon area. The number of partner referrals was 380, which was a year-on-year increase of 4.7%.
- 25/07.13 The number of accidental dwelling fires in quarter 3 was 25, against an anticipated number of 72. Cllr Small commented that revised wording could be used to add clarity that this was not a target figure.
- 25/07.14 **Priority 2 - Protect you and the environment from harm**
- 25/07.15 Wholetime operational crews had completed 150 business fire safety checks in the quarter across the Service relating to risk based low level fire safety activity. An additional 16 had been undertaken by Business Fire Safety Advisors in on-call areas.
- 25/07.16 AM Langdown reported on the automatic fire alarms strategy at non-domestic premises across the Swindon Group area. In quarter 3, 30 automatic fire alarms (AFAs) were attended in non-domestic premises in Swindon.
- 25/07.17 AM Langdown highlighted that the Authority was a statutory consultee in building regulation and licensing consultations.
- 25/07.18 **Priority 3 - Be there when you need us**
- 25/07.19 The average response times were 7.26 minutes for sleeping risk first pump, 6.54 minutes for other buildings first pump and 11.03 minutes for road traffic collisions first pump.
- 25/07.20 In reply to a question from the Chair, the officers would include in future reports details on the number of incidents to give additional context to the percentages shown on percentage response time achieved.
- 25/07.21 The officers provided reasoning as to why there had been a slight increase in the response time to road traffic collisions (RTC), as highlighted by Cllr Small. This could be due to the location of the accident, and it also reflected national trends of an increase in RTCs. Cllr Small asked that from October 2026 response standards for RTCs in the report be colour coded for trends to be identified. It was noted that from October 2025 Westlea fire station

would be wholetime, which would assist in response times, particularly to Junction 16 on the M4 motorway.

25/07.22 Action: That from October 2026 the Response Standards for RTCs in the report be colour coded for trends to be identified.

25/07.23 There had been zero potential fire deaths in 2024-25, with one remaining with the potential for fire deaths that were awaiting a Coroner's verdict. Details were provided on the Operational Effectiveness Database (OED), which was to evaluate and improve operational performance.

25/07.24 Members observed the summary of notable incidents attended in the quarter and the multi-agency exercises that the Service had participated in. The officers replied to Member questions on the appliance standby position if there was a major incident that was resource intensive, the role of fire investigation in arson cases and prosecutions and the securing of derelict buildings to prevent arson.

25/07.25 **Demand summary**

25/07.26 The Key Performance Indicators for the quarter were explained to the Committee. Attendance was for 636 automatic fire alarms which resulted in a false alarm; 63 accidental dwelling fires; 82 deliberate fires (primary and secondary) and 432 special service incidents attended.

25/07.27 The Chair thanked AM Langdown for the presentation.

25/07.28 **RESOLVED: Members scrutinised and noted the performance for quarter 3 2025.**

25/08 Matters raised by Members (agreed with Chair)

25/08.1 There were no matters raised by Members.

25/09 Date of Next Meeting

25/09.1 The Chair confirmed the date of the next Swindon Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee meeting as Wednesday 27 August 2025 at 10:00am at Westlea Fire Station, The Chesters, Stonehill Green, Westlea, SN5 7DB.

The meeting closed at 11:25 am

Signed: _____