



## DORSET & WILTSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

### Minutes of the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority meeting at 10:00 hours on 15 June 2022.

#### Members present

Cllr Steve Baron	Cllr Pete Barrow	Cllr Brian Dalton
Cllr Malcolm Davies	Cllr Millie Earl	Cllr Brian Ford
Cllr Paul Hilliard	Cllr Toby Johnson	Cllr Bob Jones
Cllr Rebecca Knox	Cllr Ashley O'Neill	Cllr Paul Oatway
Cllr Byron Quayle	Cllr Pip Ridout	Cllr Kevin Small

#### Officer attendance:

Chief Fire Officer (CFO), Ben Ansell  
Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO), Derek James  
Clerk & Monitoring Officer, Jonathan Mair  
Head of Financial Services & Treasurer, Ian Cotter  
Director of Community Safety, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO), Andy Cole  
Director of People Services, Assistant Chief Officer (ACO), Jenny Long  
Director of Service Support, Assistant Chief Officer (ACO), Jill McCrae  
Head of Corporate Support, Vikki Shearing  
Corporate Communications & Engagement Manager, Emily Cheeseman  
Democratic Services Officer, David Shaw

#### **22/19 Welcome**

22/19.1 The Clerk & Monitoring Officer, Jonathan Mair, opened the annual meeting of the Fire and Rescue Authority and welcomed Members.

#### **22/20 Apologies**

22/20.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Richard Biggs, Cllr Russel Holland and Cllr Kelvin Nash.

#### **22/21 Election of Chair**

22/21.1 Jonathan Mair asked for nominations for the role of Chair of the Authority for 2022-23. Cllr Rebecca Knox was nominated by Cllr Paul Oatway and seconded by Cllr Pip Ridout. Members unanimously agreed this nomination, and Cllr Rebecca Knox was duly elected.

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- 22/21.2 **RESOLVED: That Cllr Rebecca Knox be elected as Chair of the Authority for the year 2022-23.**
- 22/22 Election of Vice Chair**
- 22/22.1 Cllr Rebecca Knox asked for nominations for the role of Vice Chair of the Authority. Cllr Paul Oatway was nominated by Cllr Pip Ridout and seconded by Cllr Byron Quayle. Members unanimously agreed this nomination, and Cllr Paul Oatway was duly elected.
- 22/22.2 **RESOLVED: That Cllr Paul Oatway be elected as Vice Chair of the Authority for the year 2022-23.**
- 22/23 Code of Conduct and Declaration of Interests**
- 22/23.1 The Chair asked Members for any disclosures of pecuniary interests under the Localism Act. No disclosures were made.
- 22/23.2 The Chair welcomed the new Member, Cllr Brian Ford, to the Authority.
- 22/24 Review minutes of Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority meeting on 9 February 2022 and any matters arising**
- 22/24.1 The Chair asked Members to review and approve the minutes from the last meeting.
- 22/24.2 Chief Fire Officer (CFO) Ben Ansell referred to page 6, paragraph 22/11.1, of the minutes, which related to the Pay Policy Statement 2022 – 23. It was confirmed that the annual pay award for Green Book staff had now been determined at an increase of 1.75%. The 2022 annual pay award was currently under consideration.
- 22/24.3 CFO Ansell further referred to page 9, paragraph 22.18.3, which related to the Training Centre Provision item. The plot of land referred to in the minute had not been purchased as it had been subsequently sold to another purchaser. The officers were now working on options which would be brought before Members at a seminar to be held on 27 July 2022.
- 22/24.4 **RESOLVED: That the minutes be confirmed without amendment and be signed by the Chair as a correct record.**
- 22/25 Receive the approved minutes of the Finance & Audit Committee meeting on 8 December 2021 and a verbal update on the meeting held on 9 March 2022**
- 22/25.1 The Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee, Cllr Quayle, presented the approved minutes of the 8 December 2021 to Members and provided a general overview of the meeting held on 9 March 2022.

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22/25.2 Cllr Quayle referred to the changes in global circumstances between December 2021 and March 2022 following the outbreak of war in Ukraine and the impacts on the Service. The effect of failing to receive the £5 flexibility in the council tax referendum threshold was also referred to.

22/25.3 **RESOLVED: Members received the minutes of the Finance & Audit Committee meeting of 8 December 2021 and noted the Chair's verbal update from the 9 March 2022 meeting.**

## **22/26 Public Questions**

22/26.1 The meeting noted a public question submitted in respect of the proposed Portland incinerator. Details of the question and the answer provided at the meeting are contained in the appendix attached to the minutes.

22/26.2 **RESOLVED: That the question and reply be noted (see Appendix) and that a copy of the reply be sent to the provider of the public question, Jo Jackson.**

## **22/27 Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority Appointments 2022-23**

22/27.1 Jonathan Mair introduced the paper and reminded Members that appointments were based on the political proportionality of Members on the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority.

22/27.2 Jonathan Mair asked for nominations for Chair and Vice Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee. A nomination for Chair was received for Cllr Byron Quayle from Cllr Pip Ridout and seconded by Cllr Rebecca Knox. A further nomination for Chair was received for Cllr Richard Biggs from Cllr Paul Hilliard and seconded by Cllr Bob Jones. Following a vote, Cllr Byron Quayle was duly elected as Chair.

22/27.3 A nomination for Vice Chair was received for Cllr Pip Ridout from Cllr Byron Quayle and seconded by Cllr Rebecca Knox. Members unanimously agreed this nomination. Cllr Byron Quayle and Cllr Pip Ridout were duly elected Chair and Vice Chair respectively

22/27.4 Members from the Conservative Group to be appointed to the Finance & Audit Committee were:

Cllr Malcolm Davies

Cllr Kelvin Nash

Cllr Byron Quayle

Cllr Pip Ridout

Cllr Kevin Small (not a member of the Conservative Group but received their nomination).

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- 22/27.5 Members from the Liberal Democrats Alliance Group to be appointed to the Finance & Audit Committee were:  
 Cllr Pete Barrow  
 Cllr Richard Biggs  
 Cllr Paul Hilliard
- 22/27.6 Jonathan Mair consulted with Members and confirmed the following appointments to further committees, groups and additional bodies.
- 22/27.7 **Local Pension Board**  
 Cllr Rebecca Knox and Cllr Richard Biggs were unanimously appointed to the Local Pension Board and Cllr Brian Ford was unanimously appointed as a substitute.
- 22/27.8 **Local Government Association (LGA)**  
 Cllr Rebecca Knox, Cllr Paul Oatway and Cllr Kevin Small, were unanimously appointed to the Local Government Association.
- 22/27.9 **LGA Fire Commission**  
 Cllr Rebecca Knox and Cllr Paul Oatway were unanimously appointed to the LGA Fire Commission and Cllr Byron Quayle was unanimously appointed as a substitute.
- 22/27.10 **South West Councils**  
 Cllr Rebecca Knox was unanimously appointed to South West Councils.
- 22/27.11 **South West Councils Employers' Panel**  
 Cllr Rebecca Knox was unanimously appointed to South West Councils Employers' Panel.
- 22/27.12 **Wiltshire Public Service Board**  
 Cllr Rebecca Knox was unanimously appointed to the Wiltshire Public Service Board.
- 22/27.13 Constituent Authority **Community Safety Partnerships** were unanimously agreed as follows:  
 Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole – Cllr Steve Baron  
 Dorset - Cllr Pete Barrow  
 Swindon – Cllr Russell Holland  
 Wiltshire – Cllr Paul Oatway  
 Arising out of consideration of appointments to the Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), the Chair stated that clarity regarding the working of the CSPs would be sought post meeting, including the value of Service officer attendance time at their meetings and the methodology of the CSP's reporting back to the Authority itself.
- 22/27.14 **RESOLVED: Eight Members were appointed to the Finance & Audit Committee.**

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- 22/27.15 **RESOLVED: Members elected the Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee as Cllr Byron Quayle and the Vice Chair as Cllr Pip Ridout.**
- 22/27.16 **RESOLVED: Members made appointments to the Local Pensions Board, the Local Government Association, the LGA Fire Commission, South West Councils, South West Councils Employers' Panel, Wiltshire Public Service Board and the four constituent authority Community Safety Partnerships.**
- 22/27.17 **RESOLVED: That the Clerk and Monitoring Officer be given delegated authority to be able to make in year changes to Committee memberships in consultation with political group leaders.**

**22/28 White Paper – Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service**

- 22.28.1 On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) Derek James for the presentation that had been provided to Members at their seminar held on the 26 May 2022.
- 22.28.2 CFO Ansell presented the report to the Committee.
- 22.28.3 The Committee supported the report's recommendations. During debate, Members acknowledged that there were some good areas of proposed reform contained within the White Paper but raised concerns on why governance arrangements were proposed to be changed when the present arrangements worked well in certain areas, such as those operated by the Authority. It was also commented that the governance model was not correlated to performance. Questions were also raised on the necessity of taking a fire and rescue service oath when the Authority had adopted the Core Code of Ethics; the proposal to legislate to give chief fire officers operational independence and the proposed review of the National Joint Council on negotiating pay.
- 22.28.4 Members also recognised that there were some omissions within the paper that were important locally, particularly that relating to the sustainability of the on-call duty system within rural areas and nationally on the funding of the proposed reforms.
- 22.28.5 Members additionally commented on the importance of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services' inspection regime and how it could be used to improve performance within fire and rescue services rather than applying legislation to improve standards. It was suggested that reference could be made to this within paragraph 5 of the report that covered issues not immediately apparent in the White Paper.
- 22.28.6 Jonathan Mair stated that if Members wished to make additional representation regarding the Authority's submission these should be submitted to DCFO James by 19 July 2022 for inclusion into the submission by closing date of 26 July 2022. Members were reminded that they could also make personal submissions.

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22.28.7 **RESOLVED: That approval be delegated to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority, in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer and the Clerk and Monitoring Officer, to respond to the Home Office the Authority's position on the White Paper based upon the views expressed at the meeting as informed by the Members' seminar held on 26 May 2022**

**22/29 Annual Service Performance review 2021-22 - presentation**

22/29.1 DCFO James introduced the presentation and provided narrative and context to the performance slides.

22/29.2 DCFO James gave an overview of the previous year and referenced the five priorities of the Service and explained how these aligned to Local Performance and Scrutiny Committees and the Finance & Audit Committee.

22/29.3 In summary, performance had been positive over the period with good outcomes, including the delivery of good value for money and the Service being a strong and valued partner. Challenges remained, particularly relating to finance and the sustainability of the on-call duty system.

22/29.4 Reference was made to Priority 1 - making safer and healthier choices. Points highlighted included that 7,739 safe and well visits had been completed despite Covid restrictions; that an assumed 1% reduction in fires resulting from safe and well visits equated to a societal saving of £4,516,795, which for the Service was a non-cashable saving of £46,304 and cost avoidance of £42,862; the trend indicated a 4.4% reduction against the five year average in accidental dwelling fires; that there were five unconfirmed fire related deaths in the period; that there was a 23% reduction against the five year average in deliberate fires, which was largely down to improved data quality; and that the societal savings on deliberate fires was £332,550, which for the Service was non-cashable savings of £7,841 and cost avoidance of £8,471.

22/29.5 Regarding road safety, the long-term trend was downwards for road traffic collisions with a 10.4% reduction against the five year average. The road safety team had been a national award winner for its safety campaigns and that the societal savings from road safety education was £10,317,290, which for the Service was non-cashable savings of £56,668 and cost avoidance of £40,450. In terms of youth engagement the SPECTRA course had 75 attendees with a 100% course completion rate with societal savings calculated at £305,445 and the societal return on investment being £4.46 for every £1 invested and that the Service had continued with community support, with Covid vaccinations, assistance to the ambulance service and also with Ukrainian refugees.

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- 22/29.6 Reference was made to priority 2 – protecting you and the environment from harm. A wide range of improvements, including smoke hoods, had been introduced following learning from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. The trend was also downwards for unwanted automatic fire alarms showing an 8.8% reduction against the five year average presenting a non-cashable saving of £119,600 and cost avoidance of £56,875.
- 22/29.7 Reference was made to priority 3 – being there when you need us. Details were provided on Service response times and the number of incidents/fires/non-fire related incidents and false alarms attended and performance was on track. The average attendance time of the first appliance to a sleeping risk premises was 9 minutes and 24 seconds, against the target of ten minutes. Reference was also made to recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters and it was noted that there was considerable work being undertaken to engage in this area.
- 22/29.8 Reference was made to priority 4 – making every penny count. There had been good performance in the various audit and inspection regimes. There were challenges regarding financial management over the forthcoming years and grant income from partners for prevention activities was good. Over £35m had been saved by the Service since combination. Reference was also made to resilience and business continuity with Members encouraged to attend exercise events. The number of working days lost to the Service due to ill health had increased but this was largely attributed to Covid. Over the period 19 new appliances had been delivered as well as a number of specialist vehicles. There had been good overall performance regarding information governance and the Service was moving well to full integration of Office 365 to improve service efficiency.
- 22/29.9 Reference was made to priority 5 – supporting and developing our people. It was noted that workforce diversity had a 7.1% increase against the five year average and that the on-call duty system average length of service had fallen. Statistical details were provided on the wellbeing of staff and the enhancement of staff development through the promotion process was explained.
- 22/29.10 Cllr Hilliard enquired about the provision of sprinklers within high rise buildings and CFO Ansell provided a detailed explanation of the powers and responsibilities of the Authority and Service in this respect.
- 22/29.11 Cllr Knox referred to specialist services and the number of incidents that the Service attended. CFO Ansell explained the Service's support of the ambulance service and the police and the impact that this additional support had on the Service.
- 22/29.12 **RESOLVED: Members noted the Annual Service Performance review.**

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## **22/30 Local Performance & Scrutiny Feedback (verbal)**

- 22/30.1 Local Performance & Scrutiny Committee (LPS) Chairs, were invited to update the meeting about recent activity at their meetings.
- 22/30.2 Cllr Barrow confirmed positive performance for Dorset LPS. Reference was also made to on-call arrangements, the impact of winter storms and that a resultant waking watch on recommendation of the Service at a care home had detected a fire and a serious situation was avoided. A presentation had been received from Area Manager Marc House on fire education and the Committee had considered the use of mobile phones and the implications for road safety.
- 22/30.3 Cllr Ridout confirmed that the Wiltshire LPS committee meeting on the 8 June had been postponed. Reference was made to the service video being shown at all Wiltshire Council Area Board meetings. It was noted that this approach was not supported by a chair of an Area Board and the decision had been delegated to the chairs of the individual Area Boards as to whether they wished to show the video.
- 22/30.4 Cllr Toby Johnson referred to the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole LPS, that targets had been complied with, that premises information plates had been installed except for one to an empty property and the success of the Princes' Trust events and of the passing out parades. Reference was also made to the Canford Heath fire and that the local Member of Parliament would be attending the next LPS meeting. Councillor Johnson also extended his thanks to Area Manager Seth Why for his help in assisting the Committee prior to moving to a new role within the Service.
- 22/30.5 Cllr Small, on behalf of the Swindon LPS Chair, reported that the Swindon LPS Committee meeting had explored the roles of on-call and wholetime firefighters and the drivers for recruitment. The issue of bin fires had been discussed and the value of educational school visits. The SPECTRA programme and HARBOUR (to aid refugees and asylum seekers in Swindon) programmes were also complimented.

## **22/31 Service Highlights - public video**

- 22/31.1 CFO Ansell introduced the in-house video which was available on the Service's YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/4AFZoVIszBQ>

## **22/32 Date of next meeting**

- 22/32.1 The Chair confirmed the next meeting of the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority would take place on 29 September 2022 at 10.00am.

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**Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority meeting – 15 June 2022****22/33 Public Question**

22/33.1 The following question had been received from Jo Jackson, a resident and business owner of Fortuneswell, Portland, regarding fire risk at the proposed Portland incinerator

22/33.2 ‘Dear Mr Ansell and the Authority

I have tried to find out if you know about the fire and rescue risks involved with the proposed incinerator at Portland Port.

To date, I cannot find a definitive comment from Mr Ansell or the Authority. My question for your forthcoming June meeting:

Has there been any comment/objection formally registered from the fire service? if not why not?’

Included in the covering email from Jo Jackson was additional information regarding the Newhaven Incinerator. Problems were highlighting the potential impact on Portland if the planning application was approved.

22/33.3 The following reply was read by Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) Andy Cole at the meeting:

Dorset & Wiltshire Fire Rescue Authority is not a statutory consultee for planning applications of this nature, however we do get informed by all four local authorities in the Authority area about planning applications which may be of interest to the Fire and Rescue Authority. I can confirm we have been informed of the planning application for the proposed Powerfuel Portland Energy Recovery Facility at Castletown, Portland. Fire and rescue services routinely provide a generic response to planning applications, however the grounds for comment, or indeed objection, are limited to those areas not already covered by other legislation, to which we would provide a consultation response under Building Regulations. Therefore, in line with our approach, we have submitted a generic response to this planning application. To date, we have not yet received any submission for Building Regulations approval for the proposed site. When we do, we will of course respond in full, as a statutory consultee.

The developers are required to submit a fire prevention plan to the Environment Agency, who regulate waste activity and associated permitting of waste processing sites. We have seen a draft version of the prior prevention plan, dated August 2021, which outlines the considerations and options being proposed for fire prevention and

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extinguishment. However, due to the stage the design of the site is at, we recognise that these lack specific detail and therefore are unable to make significant comment as to their effectiveness at this point. A range of options and equipment are proposed within the initial plan which, if designed appropriately, should reduce the fire risk to an acceptable level, whilst acknowledging that it is not possible to remove the risk completely.

Both Building Regulations and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order are concerned primarily with life safety, and as such have limited scope to regulate special and technical fire hazards associated with process risk operations which are separately regulated by the Health and Safety Executive. As such, our legislative powers to object to some aspects of a development are limited.

Where a proposed development may require further consideration in terms of the fire and rescue service's ability to respond to an incident, this information is used to develop our Community Risk Management Plan in conjunction with local emergency planning teams but is not generally grounds to voice an objection to a lawful application for planning permission. Detailed consideration of the access and facilities for firefighting is discussed at Building Regulations consultation stage (specifically, Approved Document B, Volume 2, Section B5).

The draft plans seen for the Powerfuel Portland Energy Recovery Facility indicate that the site will be designed and operated according to a range of industry standards, and we are not in a position to challenge this, if indeed it is appropriate to do so, until more detailed design work is undertaken. Where planning assumptions have been made within draft documentation, these will be subject to further discussion with the developer in the event that the proposal is approved in principle.

Meeting closed at 12:40hrs

*Signed:* \_\_\_\_\_

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