



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

**Draft Minutes of the Swindon Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee held at
10:00am on 30 August 2023 at Westlea Fire Station, The Chesters, Stonehill
Green, Westlea, SN5 7DB**

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

Members present:

Cllr Abdul Amin
Cllr Matthew Courtliff
Cllr Kevin Small

Officer attendance:

Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) - Director of Community Safety, Andy Cole
Area Manager (AM), Darren Langdown
Group Manager (GM), Neil Tidball
Democratic Services Officer, David Shaw

23/10 Election of Chair

23/10.1 Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO), Andy Cole opened the meeting. He asked for nominations for the role of Chair. Cllr Abdul Amin was nominated by Cllr Kevin Small. This was seconded by Cllr Matthew Courtliff. With unanimous approval Cllr Abdul Amin was elected Chair.

23/10.2 **RESOLVED: Cllr Abdul Amin be elected Chair of the Swindon Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee.**

23/11 Welcome

23/11.1 Cllr Amin welcomed Members and officers to the meeting.

23/12 Apologies

23/12.1 No apologies were received.

23/13 Code of Conduct, Declaration of Interests

23/13.1 The Chair asked the meeting for any disclosures of pecuniary interests under the Localism Act. There were no disclosures.

23/14 Public Questions

23/14.1 There were no members of the public present and no public questions had been received.

23/14.2 **RESOLVED: Members noted that there were no public questions**

23/15 Review and approve minutes of the Swindon Local Performance and Scrutiny (LPS) meeting on 1 March 2023

23/15.1 The Chair asked Members to review and approve the minutes from the last meeting.

23/15.2 **RESOLVED: That the minutes be confirmed without amendment and be signed by the Chair as a correct record.**

23/16 Action Progress Report

23/16.1 The Democratic Services Officer reported that no actions had been taken at the meeting on 1 March 2023 and that there were none outstanding from previous meetings.

23/16.2 **RESOLVED: Members noted that there were no actions outstanding.**

23/17 Performance monitoring and briefing quarter 1

23/17.1 GM Tidball presented to Members the performance monitoring and briefing for quarter 1, 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](#)

23/17.2 **Priority 1 - Help you to make safer and healthier choices.**

23/17.3 GM Tidball referred to the extensive partnership work undertaken by the Service. A new initiative was the 'Clear, Hold, Build' partnership, which was Police led and targeted areas of deprivation to address crime, school absenteeism etc. In Swindon the pilot scheme was focussed on the Broadgreen district and involved 64 agencies including the parish council. The aim was to make the targeted area a safe place to live, work and visit, and if successful the initiative could be extended to other areas. In reply to

a question from Cllr Small, the officers explained the role of the Service in such initiatives, the objective being to add value, including using the Service's data for Safe and Well visits, the promotion of healthy living options and fire prevention and protection, for example, of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) and for businesses to be safe.

- 23/17.4 GM Tidball also referred to the work that was being undertaken regarding asylum seekers and the provision of fire safety information.
- 23/17.5 GM Tidball stated that wholetime availability and attendance was good and in line with the corporate target and that on-call appliance availability was 71.5%. The recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters remained a challenge. It was also noted that criteria changes to bluelight drivers' registration had impacted overall availability of on-call. Initiatives to improve on-call included succession planning, development hubs and 'Have a Go' days. It was noted that qualified firefighters needed to be retained in the Service for approximately three years to provide a return on the training investment. Three approaches to recruitment were taken: external recruitment for wholetime, transfer into the Service and transferability of on-call. ACFO Cole explained the targets for on-call availability and that the Service was the second largest employer of on-call in the country. On-call firefighters were remunerated but pay was not the only factor in recruitment and that the issue of on-call recruitment and retention was being considered nationally. Further, the Service was undertaking a fire cover review as part of its Community Risk Management Plan.
- 23/17.6 GM Tidball reported that social media was an effective method in assisting in preventing fires. In the quarter the Service's Social Media message had reached 502,832 people and the campaign message on thatch fires had reached 175,790 users. The Service also ran local campaigns in association with National Fire Chiefs Council national campaigns.
- 23/17.7 In respect of road safety, the Safe Drive Stay Alive roadshow events had been attended by 246 participants and in education 1,786 children and young people had received educational input, with 18 schools visited together with youth groups. Year to date there had been no firesetter referrals. In reply to a question from the Chair, ACFO Cole explained that school education was targeted to deliver to those areas presenting the highest risk.
- 23/17.8 In reply to a question from the Chair, ACFO Cole provided detail on matched funding from partners and also sponsorship. Cllr Small commented that, in Swindon, parish councils were very active and might be able provide matching funding towards fire safety. ACFO Cole stated funding options for prevention had been considered as part of budget setting, and as part of a more targeted approach new Safe and Well advisors had been recruited. The approach would need to be centrally funded by the Service, so that it was consistent across the Service area and not confined to the Swindon area. Cllr Small suggested that Swindon could be used as a pilot area, which could be considered by the Service.

23/17.9 GM Tidball highlighted that 362 Safe and Well visits had been undertaken in quarter 1, which was an increase on the previous quarter, and was 13% lower than on quarter 1 in the previous year. This was due to the Prevention team restructure and staff moving to other roles. A new Safe and Well advisor had been recruited for the area and they were being inducted into their role. Partner referrals, from organisations had increased by 53.5% to reach 368, which reflected the added concentration on partnership working.

23/17.10 **Priority 2 - Protect you and the environment from harm**

23/17.11 GM Tidball reported that one Enforcement Notice and one Prohibition Notice had been served in the quarter and that operational crews had made 131 Business Fire Safety Checks across the Service.

23/17.12 GM Tidball highlighted the 74 automatic fire alarms attended in non-domestic premises. The Service's revised approach to challenge attendance had saved 15 hours for wholetime stations.

23/17.13 **Priority 3 - Be there when you need us**

23/17.14 The Committee noted that response times were 98.8% for wholetime and 71.4% for on-call for quarter 1. The ongoing work to ensure improvements to on-call availability was discussed further.

23/17.15 GM Tidball reported on incidents attended during the quarter and that there had been no fire deaths during 2022/23. Information was also provided on the multi-agency training exercises attended.

23/17.16 The Chair thanked the Officers for the presentation and commented that information to compare quarter on quarter of incidents and their type would be beneficial to Members.

23/17.17 **RESOLVED: Members scrutinised and noted the performance for quarter 1.**

23/18 Matters raised by Members (agreed with Chair)

23/18.1 No matters were raised.

23/19 Date of Next Meeting

23/19.1 The Chair confirmed the date of the next Swindon Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee meeting as 29 November 2023 at 10:00am at Westlea Fire Station, The Chesters, Stonehill Green, Westlea, SN5 7DB.

The meeting closed at 11:15

Signed: _____