



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

Minutes of the Swindon Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee held at 10:00am on 28 February 2024 at Westlea Fire Station, The Chesters, Stonehill Green, Westlea, Swindon.

Members present:

Cllr Abdul Amin (Chair)

Cllr Matthew Courtliff

Cllr Kevin Small

Officer attendance:

Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) - Director of Community Safety, Andy Cole

Temporary Deputy Assistant Chief Fire Officer (TDACFO), Darren Langdown

Democratic Services Officer, David Shaw

24/01 Welcome

24/01.1 Cllr Abdul Amin welcomed Members and officers to the meeting. It was noted that the meeting of the Committee scheduled for 29 November 2023 had been postponed due to the meeting being inquorate.

24/02 Apologies

24/02.1 No apologies were received.

24/03 Code of Conduct and Declarations of Interests

24/03.1 The Chair asked the meeting for any disclosures of pecuniary interests under the Localism Act. There were no disclosures.

24/04 Public Questions

24/04.1 There were no members of the public present and no public questions had been received.

24/04.2 RESOLVED: Members noted that there were no public questions

24/05 Review and approve minutes of the Swindon Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 30 August 2023

24/05.1 The Chair asked Members to review and approve the minutes from the last meeting.

24/05.2 RESOLVED: That the minutes be confirmed without amendment and be signed by the Chair as an accurate record.

24/06 Action Progress Report

24/06.1 The Democratic Services Officer reported that no actions had been taken at the meeting on 30 August 2023 and that there were none outstanding from previous meetings.

24/06.2 RESOLVED: Members noted that there were no actions outstanding.

24/07 Performance monitoring and briefing quarter 3

24/07.1 Temporary Deputy Assistant Chief Fire Officer (TDACFO), Darren Langdown presented to Members the performance monitoring and briefing for quarter 3, 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](#)

24/07.2 Priority 1 - Help you to make safer and healthier choices.

24/07.3 TDACFO Langdown highlighted the value of partnership working, including the Swindon Community Safety Partnership, the Harbour Project, the Road Safety Partnerships, the Swindon Safeguarding Partnership and the Local Resilience Forums (LRFs). Mention was made of the local risk reviews which considered service demands for each station to assist in priorities in prevention and improvement. In reply to a question from the Chair, it was explained that the Service worked with the Harbour Project to promote fire safety in the home by training lead persons from eight different nationalities in their own language to promote fire safety within their communities. The Chair suggested that the Service also make contact with Swindon City of Sanctuary.

24/07.4 TDACFO Langdown reported that the availability of on-call appliances was 67.60%, and for wholetime appliances 99.80%, which was a good figure. TDACFO Langdown continued that there were a number of initiatives to

improve on-call availability. These included a review of on-call staff current contract availability, succession planning to maintain availability and targeted recruitment campaigns. The HR72 on-call contract review would consider where value could be added to fire stations by providing flexibility in on call availability. In reply to a question from Cllr Kevin Small, the officers explained that wholetime unavailability was predominantly due to mechanical factors with appliances, and that for on-call unavailability was largely due to staffing factors, for example unfulfilling contracted hours or through skill sets, such as having insufficient trained drivers available. It was the intention that on-call availability figures would increase over the next six months in response to the initiatives that had been taken. Within the third quarter there had been three new on-call recruits within the Swindon area.

24/07.5 The percentage of operational competence in date of staff was good and in line with corporate targets.

24/07.6 TDACFO Langdown drew attention to the social media activity which was aligned to the National Fire Chiefs Council campaigns, for example regarding smoke alarm testing, electrical safety and Christmas. A focus in the winter had been on keeping warm safely. The key prevention safety messages were shared across various social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram and Nextdoor.com. A total of 188,757 engagements were seen across all platforms. TDACFO Langdown explained that campaigns were undertaken using social media by the Communications Team, with the Service supporting events in-person where there was value.

24/07.7 Details were provided on the number of road safety inputs (170) and education inputs (2372) in quarter 3; and that there were six Fire Safety Intervention (previously Firesetters) referrals. The educational input comprised 1794 children in 18 school visits, 202 pre-school nursery children when visiting stations, 346 children in fire station visits and 30 ad-hoc engagements. In reply to a question from Cllr Small, the officers explained that there were educational packages for each age group, including primary age children and that these were designed on a risk rating matrix so that delivery could be targeted.

24/07.8 There were 329 safe and well visits carried out in quarter 3, which was a decrease of 21.5% on the same quarter in the previous year, with visits being more targeted. There was a target to respond to safe and well requests from partner referrals within 56 days. A total of 20 safeguarding referrals were raised by staff within the Swindon area. There were also 363 partner referrals in the quarter, which was a 15% increase on the same period in the previous year.

24/07.9 The number of accidental dwelling fires in quarter 3 had increased in the quarter, but the long-term trend was decreasing.

24/07.10 **Priority 2 - Protect you and the environment from harm**

- 24/07.11 Wholetime operational crews had carried out 275 business fire safety checks in the quarter across the Service area relating to risk based low level fire safety activity.
- 24/07.12 TDACFO Langdown reported that there had been 84 automatic fire alarm calls at non-domestic premises in the quarter in Swindon. The automatic fire alarms strategy at non-domestic premises across the Service area had delivered cashable savings of £6,905 for on-call non-attendance and returned 60 hours to wholetime crews.
- 24/07.13 **Priority 3 - Be there when you need us**
- 24/07.14 The average response times were 07.30 minutes for sleeping risk first pump, 12.12 minutes for other buildings first pump and 09.18 minutes for road traffic collisions first pump. The 12.12 minutes for other buildings first pump response time related to four incidents, with only one having a protracted response time.
- 24/07.15 There had been no potential fire deaths in the quarter 3 period, with none remaining with the potential for fire deaths that were awaiting a Coroner's verdict in 2022/23.
- 24/07.16 Members discussed the summary of incidents presented at the meeting, including the issues arising from flooding. It was noted that improved risk planning and work at Fire Control led to a triage approach in responding to calls regarding flooding, with those presenting risk to life being prioritised. In reply to a question from the Chair, the officers outlined the work that was undertaken with the LRFs on long term flood prevention and also the use of the voluntary sector in providing response. The meeting also discussed the emerging challenges of fighting electric vehicle fires, with national and international learning being taken into account.
- 24/07.17 The Chair thanked TDACFO Langdown for the presentation
- 24/07.18 **RESOLVED: Members scrutinised and noted the performance for quarter 3 2024.**
- 24/08 **Matters raised by Members (agreed with Chair)**
- 24/08.1 There were no matters raised by Members.
- 24/09 **Date of Next Meeting**
- 24/09.1 The Chair confirmed the date of the next Swindon Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee meeting as Wednesday 4 September 2024 at 10:00am.

The meeting closed at 10:55

Signed: _____