



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

Minutes of the Swindon Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee held at 10:00am on 27 November 2024 at Westlea Fire Station, The Chesters, Stonehill Green, Westlea, SN5 7DB

Members present:

Cllr Abdul Amin (Chair)

Cllr Matthew Courtliff

Cllr Kevin Small

Observer:

Cllr Paul Oatway (Chair of the Authority)

Officer attendance:

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

Area Manager (AM), Stuart Gillion

Democratic Services Officer, David Shaw

24/25 Welcome

24/25.1 Cllr Abdul Amin welcomed Members and officers to the meeting.

24/26 Apologies

24/26.1 No apologies were received.

24/27 Code of Conduct, Declaration of Interests

24/27.1 The Chair asked the meeting for any disclosures of pecuniary interests under the Localism Act. There were no disclosures.

24/28 Public Questions

24/28.1 The meeting noted a public question submitted and read out by Firefighter Alex Davidson, Fire Brigades Union, Swindon Branch Secretary, Brigade Organiser (North), on behalf of Swindon Fire Brigades Union Branch, regarding the Resourcing and Savings programme and the reply of the Chair (minute 24/34 post refers).

- 24/28.2 RESOLVED: Members noted the public question and reply of the Chair.**
- 24/29 Review and approve minutes of the Swindon Local Performance and Scrutiny (LPS) meeting on 4 September 2024**
- 24/29.1 The Chair asked Members to review and approve the minutes from the previous meeting.
- 24/29.2 RESOLVED: That the minutes be confirmed without amendment and be signed by the Chair as a correct record.**
- 24/30 Action Progress Report**
- 24/30.1 The Democratic Services Officer reported that no actions had been taken at the meeting on 4 September 2024 that there were none outstanding from previous meetings.
- 24/30.2 RESOLVED: Members noted that there were no actions outstanding.**
- 24/31 Performance monitoring and briefing quarter 2**
- 24/31.1 Area Manager (AM) Stuart Gillion 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](#)
- 24/31.2 Priority 1 - Help you to make safer and healthier choices.**
- 24/31.3 AM Gillion 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).
- 24/31.4 AM Gillion reported that the availability of on-call appliances was 72.4%, and for wholtime appliances 99.9%, which was a good figure.
- 24/31.5 The percentage of operational competence in date of staff was good and in line with corporate targets.
- 24/31.6 AM Gillion drew attention to the social media activity which was aligned to the National Fire Chiefs Council campaigns, for example regarding chimney fire safety and gas safety weeks. The key prevention safety messages were shared across various social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram and Nextdoor.com. A total of 262,238 engagements

were seen across all platforms. The most popular prevention post on Next Door was during gas safety week and 47,259 people viewed and engaged with this post. The most viewed post on Facebook was regarding e-bikes and charging batteries, which reached 12,495 people. In reply to a question from Cllr Kevin Small, the officers explained that the National Fire Chiefs Council event campaigns were substantially seasonal based, for example outdoor fire safety in the summer, but new issues arising were also covered, for example e-bikes and charging batteries.

- 24/31.7 Details were provided on the contributions to road safety campaigns and education inputs (1648) in quarter 2. The educational input comprised 988 children in their main form of education, 660 pre-schools, nurseries, children's groups and ad hoc arrangements. There were seven open Fire Safety Intervention referrals (previously Firesetters) in the quarter and two cases had been closed. The officers stated that school visits and virtual education packages were targeted on a risk-based approach to communities. Schools were now ranked based upon the number of accidental dwelling fires with children living at homes within the stations area, the response time and the index of deprivation data taken into consideration.
- 24/31.8 There were 251 safe and well visits carried out in quarter 2, with visits being more targeted. A total of 27 safeguarding referrals were raised by staff within the Swindon area. At the invitation of the Chair, Cllr Paul Oatway observed that there were 21 accidental dwelling fires in the Swindon area in quarter 2 and asked how this figure compared with the Wiltshire area. The officers provided figures to Cllr Oatway and commented that the figures were consistent and low, presented no concerns and would continue to be monitored to be reduced.
- 24/31.09 **Priority 2 - Protect you and the environment from harm**
- 24/31.10 Wholetime operational crews had carried out 171 business fire safety checks in the quarter across the Service area relating to risk based low level fire safety activity.
- 24/31.11 AM Gillion reported that there had been 41 automatic fire alarm calls at non-domestic premises in the quarter in Swindon. The call challenge procedure had been extended to 24 hours (from 8:00am to 6:00pm at present) to reduce further unwanted automatic fire alarm calls and provide savings.
- 24/31.12 **Priority 3 - Be there when you need us**
- 24/31.13 The average response times were 07.35 minutes for sleeping risk first pump, 10.20 for sleeping risk second pump, 07.06 minutes for other buildings first pump 18.19 minutes for other buildings second pump and 10.00 minutes for road traffic collisions first pump.
- 24/31.14 The Chair enquired how response standards compared with the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area and whether standards should be RAG (red, amber and green) rated. The officers explained that small

numbers were involved that influenced figures and that performance in the Swindon area would be improved further with Westlea Fire Station adding additional shifts.

24/31.15 There had been no potential fire deaths in the quarter 2 period, with the coroner confirming no fire deaths in 2024 - 2025. Details were provided on the Operational Effectiveness Database (OED), which was to evaluate and improve operational performance. In reply to a question from Cllr Small, the officers confirmed that feedback was provided to staff that inputted data into the system. The OED system would be reviewed to further enhance its capability as part of the digital transformation programme.

24/31.16 Members noted the summary of incidents presented at the meeting and the Service's involvement in the Local Resilience Forum and multi- agency exercises.

24/31.17 **Demand Summary**

24/31.18 The Key Performance Indicators for the quarter were explained to the Committee. Attendance was for 494 automatic fire alarms which resulted in a false alarm; 38 accidental dwelling fires; 60 deliberate fires (primary and secondary) and 293 special service incidents attended.

24/31.19 The Chair thanked AM Gillion for the presentation

24/31.20 RESOLVED: Members scrutinised and noted the performance for quarter 2.

24/32 Matters raised by Members (agreed with the Chair)

24/32.1 The officers responded to Members' questions on the Service's response to the recent high winds and flooding arising from storm Bert, including work with partner agencies.

24/33 Date of Next Meeting

24/33.1 The Chair confirmed the date of the next Swindon Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee meeting as 26 February 2025 at 10:00am at Westlea Fire Station, The Chesters, Stonehill Green, Westlea, SN5 7DB.

The meeting closed at 10:35

Signed: _____

**Dorset & Wiltshire Swindon Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee
meeting – 27 November 2024**

24/34 Public Question

24/34.1 Question read out by Firefighter Alex Davidson Fire Brigades Union, Swindon Branch Secretary, Brigade Organiser (North), on behalf of Swindon Fire Brigades Union Branch.

24/34.2 Are Councillors in agreement that proposals put forward by DWFRS to downgrade Trowbridge and Chippenham from day crewed to day duty stations, thereby losing guaranteed cover at night, has the potential to withdraw cover and resources from Swindon to meet demands in Wiltshire and possibly beyond, consequently putting public lives at risk in Swindon?

24/34.3 Reply from the Chair - Cllr Amin:

24/34.4 The changes being made in Trowbridge and Chippenham are decisions made under the Chief Fire Officers delegation, Members have been kept regularly informed of the decisions being made and the impacts of these for staff and the communities across the Service.

The programme of work seeks to address the financial challenges being faced by the Service, whilst ensuring effective use of public money by aligning resources to risk and demand.

Members of the Authority are assured that the decision-making process is based on robust, credible data from the fire cover review, which covers a four-year period.