



Draft Minutes of the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority meeting at 10:00 hours on 09 December 2025 held at the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Salisbury.

These are draft minutes prepared by Officers in conjunction with the Chair and Vice Chair to be approved by the Fire and Rescue Authority at its next meeting.

Members present:

Cllr Clare Weight (Chair)	Cllr Paul Oatway (Vice Chair)	Cllr Abdul Amin
Cllr Boaz Barry	Cllr Laura Beddow	Cllr Richard Biggs
Cllr Matt Bragg	Cllr Andrew Davis	Cllr Michelle Dower
Cllr Paul Hilliard	Cllr Kevin Small	Cllr Duncan Sowry-House

Officer attendance:

Chief Fire Officer (CFO), Andy Cole
Assistant Chief Officer (ACO), Director of Financial Services & Treasurer, Ryan Maslen
Assistant Chief Officer (ACO), Director of Corporate Services and Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority, Vikki Shearing
Monitoring Officer, Lisa Kirkman
Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) - Director of Response, Darren Langdown
Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) - Director of Safety and Compliance, Dave Waters
Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) - Director of People Services, Jenny Long
Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) - Director of Service Support, Jill McCrae
Head of Corporate Communications & Engagement, Emily Cheeseman
Democratic Services Officer, David Shaw

25/41 Welcome

25/41.1 The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting, including new Member Cllr Michelle Dower who had replaced Cllr Cameron Adams representing Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council on the Authority.

25/42 Apologies

25/42.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Olivia Brown, Cllr Brian Dalton, Cllr Peter Miles, Cllr Byron Quayle and Cllr Paul Sample.

25/43 Code of Conduct and Declaration of Interests

25/43.1 The Chair asked the meeting for any disclosures of pecuniary interests under the Localism Act. No disclosures were made.

25/44 Review minutes of the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority meeting on 30 September 2025 and any matters arising

25/44.1 The Chair asked Members to review and approve the minutes from the last meeting.

25/44.2 RESOLVED: That the minutes of the 30 September 2025 meeting be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

25/45 Receive minutes of the Finance & Audit Committee meeting of 10 September 2025 and a verbal update from the Finance & Audit Committee 3 December 2025 meeting.

25/45.1 Cllr Kevin Small, Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee, presented the minutes of the meeting of 10 September 2025 and provided an update on the meeting of the Committee held on 3 December 2025.

25/45.2 RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Finance & Audit Committee meeting of 10 September 2025 be received and the verbal update for the 3 December 2025 meeting be noted.

25/46 Public questions

25/46.1 No questions were received from members of the public.

25/47 Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2025-26

25/47.1 Assistant Chief Officer (ACO), Director of Financial Services & Treasurer, Ryan Maslen presented the report.

25/47.2 Cllr Kevin Small, Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee, highlighted the importance of the report and the approach to delay borrowing by using existing cash flow liquidity, which would help the long-term financial position. It was noted that when this approach was used rather than borrowing it would reduce the amount available to invest, which in turn would reduce interest income.

25/47.3 In reply to a question from Cllr Duncan Sowry-House, ACO Maslen explained that external borrowing would be delayed until anticipated falls in interest

rates took place later in 2026. The relationship between borrowing and the Capital Financing Requirement was also explained.

25/47.4 In reply to a question from Cllr Richard Biggs, ACO Maslen provided details on the Authority's resilience to mitigate changes in interest rates. The Service met regularly with its treasury advisor to discuss economic data to give assurance and the Government's Public Works Loan Board was on call daily to provide finance at short notice if required to protect the financial position of the Service.

25/47.5 ACO Maslen replied to Cllr Matt Bragg that the Service was aware of the association between its treasury advisor Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group (MUFG) and the current investment in Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC) Bank International and had spoken with MUFG about their independence in providing advice.

25/47.6 RESOLVED: That the Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2025-26 be noted.

25/48 Service performance six monthly review 2025-26

25/48.1 Each of the Strategic Leadership Team Directors provided a summary of the past six months' performance against the Authority's five strategic priorities as set out in the Community Safety Plan. The review provided a quarter 1 and quarter 2 annual comparison and considered seasonal trends.

25/48.2 The detailed presentation covered the topic areas comprehensively. These included that there had been 11 fire fatalities in the period, all of whom were males over 55 years in age and this group were now the subject of pro-active community targeting (PACT); that the Service had undertaken 3,459 home safety visits and there were 3,211 referrals received from partner organisations; that there had been 391 safeguarding referrals so far this year; that the number of road traffic collisions attended was 297; that the number of automatic false alarms attended had fallen due to the call challenge policy and that they were only six Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) incidents, which was low in comparison to the number on incidents attended. The challenges faced with on-call recruitment and retention and the Service's response were also explained.

25/48.3 In reply to Members' questions, the Officers explained that consideration would be given to the role Social Media had to play in encouraging young people to start fires deliberately; that the improper use of Air Fryers and Lithium batteries were national issues and the National Fire Chiefs Council were to undertake national publicity campaigns, and that the Service was working with Kushti Bok Dorset to improve fire safety on Gypsy and Traveller sites.

25/48.4 The Officers continued that the Service was also undertaking two prosecutions to ensure conformity with fire safety regulations; that future presentations consider including the mode as well as the mean when considering the average length of service of on-call staff; that the reason the Service had provided an increase in support to partners for collapsed behind closed doors incidents was to support the Police's capacity, following a policy decision by the Police nationally to change their response to these incidents; that consideration would be given to holding personal interviews at the commencement of the training period to improve recruitment and that education was important to provide a Clean Cab on appliances.

25/48.5 In reply to further Member questions, the officers explained the categories contained within a breach of Code of Ethics; in relation to a question about specific initiatives run to support women in operational roles, the Service had run a Women's development programme, which had been attended by several operational women; the steps taken to raise awareness of the bullying and harassment initiatives and the publicity of outcomes of investigations. ACO Jill McCrae stated that the PESTELO risk assessment methodology of strategic risk would be shared with Cllr Bragg.

25/48.6 Chief Fire Officer (CFO) Andy Cole observed that the presentation contained a considerable amount of information and Members were encouraged to provide feedback for future improvements to the presentation.

25/48.7 RESOLVED: That the performance of the Service over the past six months be noted.

25/49 Major Incident learning – presentation

25/49.1 Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) - Director of Response, Darren Langdown and Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) - Director of Safety and Compliance, Dave Waters jointly provided a presentation on the learning gained from the Major Incident at Holt Heath in August 2025. The reasons for calling a Major Incident, the multi-agency response, its outcomes and points of key learning were provided. Actions to mitigate the effect of future wildfires were explored, including possible new equipment.

25/49.2 Members acknowledged and complimented the work of the Service and other agencies in the Major Incident and commented on working with landowners to achieve improvements in land management. The contribution of the UNIMOG, a specialist off-road vehicle helpful for fighting wildfires, was mentioned together with the long recovery time for the heathland's ecosystem following a fire.

25/49.3 CFO Cole thanked all those involved for their contribution. It was added in reply to a point raised by Cllr Sowry-House that the suitability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Firefighters would be considered as part of future expenditure considerations in areas that would best benefit service delivery.

- 25/50 Verbal update from Local Performance & Scrutiny Committees**
- 25/51.1 The Committee Chairs of the Local Performance Scrutiny Committees (LPSs) provided an update on the Committees' work. Cllr Andrew Davis reported on the work of the Wiltshire LPS in the absence of its Chair, Cllr Paul Sample.
- 25/51.2 RESOLVED: That the update from the Committee Chairs be noted.**
- 25/52.1 Monitoring Officer arrangements**
- 25/52.2 The Monitoring Officer, Lisa Kirkman, declared a personal and prejudicial interest under the Localism act, as she was employed by Veale Wasbrough Vizards LLP, and withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item.
- 25/52.3 ACO Shearing presented the report and summarised the benefits of the recommendation to enter into a longer-term commitment following a procurement exercise, as this would provide for Monitoring Officer expertise and legal services provision to be from a sole source and add to resilience.
- 25/52.4 Members supported the recommendation and commented on the lack of capacity in the constituent councils' legal services departments to provide the Monitoring Officer and legal provision service.
- 25/52.5 RESOLVED: That the long-term commitment to procure a Monitoring Officer and legal services provision to run from 1 July 2026 for a minimum of 2 years with the option to extend the contract by a further 2 years be approved and that delegated authority be provided to the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority to award the provider from the procurement process and designate a Monitoring Officer from the successful provider.**
- 25/53 Service highlights – public video**
- 25/53.1 ACO Shearing introduced the in-house video which was available on the Service's YouTube channel: https://youtu.be/G-XC-xkR_BQ?si=ZA_MUDNxNg2XI2A2. The video continues to be made available to local councils and others.
- 25/53.2 RESOLVED: Members noted the Service highlights – public video.**
- 25/54 Date of next meeting**
- 25/54.1 The Chair confirmed that the next meeting of the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority would take place on 12 February 2026 at 10.00am.

Meeting ended at 12.40 hrs

Signed: _____