DORSET & WILTSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item 26/24

DRAFT Minutes of the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee held on 19 August 2026, 10:00am in the Royal Hampshire Regiment Committee Room at the Civic Centre, BCP Council Civic Centre, Bourne Avenue, Bournemouth.

Members present:
Cllr Paul Hilliard (Chair)
Cllr Clare Weight

Cllr Richard Biggs (Dorset Council Member in attendance)

Officer attendance:
Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO), Response, Darren Langdown
Area Manager (AM), Bradley Stevens
Group Manager (GM), Shaun Milton
Democratic Services Manager, Alex Cooper
Democratic Services Manager, David Shaw

26/10 Election of Chair

26/10.1 The Democratic Services Manager opened the meeting. The Democratic Services Manager sought nominations for the role of Chair of the Committee for the 2026/27 municipal year.

26/10.2 Cllr Clare Weight nominated Cllr Paul Hilliard for the role of Chair of the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Local Performance and Scrutiny (LPS) Committee for the 2026/27 municipal year. Cllr Richard Biggs seconded the nomination. There were no further nominations.

26/10.3 RESOLVED: That Cllr Paul Hilliard be elected as Chair of the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee for the 2026/27 municipal year.

26/11 Welcome

26/11.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Members and Officers.

26/12 Apologies

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26/12.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Olivia Brown, Cllr Michelle Dower, and Cllr Peter Miles.

26/13 Code of Conduct and Declarations of Interests

26/13.1 The Chair asked the meeting for any disclosures of pecuniary interests under the Localism Act. There were no disclosures.

26/14 Public questions

26/14.1 There were no members of the public present, and no public questions had been received.

26/15 Review and approve minutes of the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 18 February 2026

26/15.1 The Chair asked Members to review and approve the minutes from the previous meeting.

26/15.2 RESOLVED: That the minutes be confirmed without amendment and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

26/16 Action progress report

26/16.1 The Democratic Services Manager reported that no actions had been recorded at the meeting of 18 February 2026, and that no actions were outstanding.

26/16.2 RESOLVED: Members noted that there were no actions outstanding.

26/17 Performance monitoring and briefing

26/17.1 Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO), Response, Darren Langdown, Area Manager (AM) Bradley Stevens, and Group Manager (GM) Shaun Milton 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.

It was noted that Performance Monitoring and Briefing was presented to the Committee by way of a Performance Dashboard for each of the priority areas supported by a presentation of the highlights of the service provision for the quarter. The data for the year to date referred to quarter 1 – 1 April 2026 to 30 June 2026 and was compared with the corresponding quarter in the previous year. When necessary, Officers would provide additional detail to the Committee on an exception basis. It was clarified that the data presented

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was in minutes and seconds and included a five-year history. The quarterly data was discussed as set out in the dashboard.

26/17.2 **Priority 1 - Help you to make safer and healthier choices**.

26/17.3

Title	Current Year-to-Date	Last Year-to-Date
Number of accidental dwelling fires - BCP Council	67	71
Number of home fire safety visits Quarterly – BCP Council	476	Not Applicable
Number of safeguarding referrals from DWFRS - BCP Council	59	Not Applicable

26/17.4 The Officers reported that there had been, across the entire Service area, 225 deliberate fires within the quarter, which was 38.52% lower than in the same period year on year. This was 18% below the target of 275. The response time to properties with sleeping risk was 09.24 minutes, which was 63 seconds faster than in the same quarter last year and below the 10-minute response standard. In response to a question from Cllr Clare Weight, Officers confirmed that response times within the BCP area were always the fastest within the Service, owing largely to the density of stations within the area, including wholetime stations, and work done by Officers to deliver improved response times.

26/17.5 The number of false fire alarm actuations had been 1187, which was 11.88% higher than in the same period last year and 3.13% above the target. On-call optimal availability had been 70.6%, which was 9.4 points below the target of 80%. There had been 229 accidental dwelling fires, which was 19.89% higher than the figure in the same period last year and 45.86% above target.

26/17.6 In reply to a question from Cllr Weight, the Officers explained the role of the Service in responding to Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs). This included requests from other emergency services to make the scene of the RTC safe, for example in dealing with diesel spills.

26/17.7 The Officers reported that there had been a year-on-year improvement in the average response times by first and second appliances to properties with sleeping risk, to 07.13 minutes from 07.58 for the first appliance and to 10.19 from 10.30 for the second appliance. Response times to other properties for both first and second appliances had risen slightly, which was attributed to a larger volume of calls in relation to other properties. It was noted that the number of calls to other properties, which included sheds and outbuildings, may grow in Q2 as a result of fires spreading to these properties during the very hot weather experienced during Q1.

26/17.8 In response to a query from the Chair, Officers confirmed that cross-border

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incidents that the Service responded to that related to other properties were not counted as part of the Service's figures.

26/17.9 The Officers advised that the response time by first appliances to Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) had improved year-on-year from 08.15 minutes to 07.56 minutes. It was reported that there had been a spike in accidental dwelling fires across the Service area during Q1, with 229 incidents. Within the BCP area, incidents of accidental dwelling fires had fallen year-on-year from 71 to 67 for the year to date. The number of deliberate fires had fallen year-on-year from 99 down to 84 for the year to date.

26/17.10 The Chair asked whether the Service was able to tap into information from any of the groups or individuals setting deliberate fires, such as via social media. Officers responded that the Service's media and prevention teams did monitor social media and reach out to those deemed to be at risk or likely to engage in this behaviour. The National Fire Chiefs' Council (NFCC) was undertaking a programme of outreach work within this space. Officers stated that the key to prevention as it concerned deliberate fire setting or problematic relationships with fire was early intervention. Officers updated Members on some trends that had been identified in the Canford Heath area relating to deliberate fires, and on the partnership work that had been undertaken with the Police to address the incidents.

26/17.11 It was reported that fire-related injuries remained very low. The number of Home Fire Safety visits that had been undertaken in the year to date was 476. The Service was seeing an upward trend in the number of safeguarding referrals made. Officers advised that this was a positive statistic as it reflected an increase in the number of people in need being referred to the safeguarding team as well as heightened awareness of safeguarding amongst staff.

26/17.12 **Priority 2 – Protect you and the environment from harm**

Title	Current Year-to-Date	Last Year-to-Date
Automatic fire alarms which result in a false alarm Quarterly - BCP Council	322	320
Automatic fire alarms which result in a false alarm – non-domestic premises - BCP Council (year to date)	87	59
Number of business fire safety checks undertaken by crews - BCP Council	63	Not Applicable

26/17.13 Officers advised Members that the Service was reducing the number of non-domestic properties that were attended in response to automatic fire alarms by utilising call challenging to ensure that there was a suitable

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reason for a crew to attend. It was suggested that the rise in non-domestic property fires may have been the result of a larger number of secondary fires spreading to these property types. With reference to business fire safety checks, Officers advised that Firefighters undertook these checks where time allowed, and that data was retained on those businesses that refused to allow fire safety checks to take place. Where Firefighters were able to undertake these checks, this freed up the fire safety team to focus on the more complex and time-consuming investigations and checks. Crews were also able to record important administrative information, such as premises details, which also aided the fire safety team.

26/17.14 **Priority 3 - Be there when you need us**

26/17.15 The quarterly data for Priority 3 was discussed as set out in the dashboard.

26/17.16 It was reported that the figures for the number of people rescued from fire-related incidents, from RTCs, and from flooding remained low. The percentage of Breathing Apparatus (BA) competencies in date was 98.21%, the percentage of Incident Command competencies in date was 100%, the percentage of Casualty Care competencies in date was 96.73%, and the percentage of Driving competencies in date was 98.99%, all of which were measured against a target of 90%. The Officers explained that the requirement for Watch Managers (WMs) to renew their BA competencies had become voluntary as WMs did not generally wear BA. This change had been made to aid in the retention of WMs, who may not wish to wear BA beyond a certain stage in their career. Officers provided an update on the cancellation of training sessions over the summer, which would see a reduction in the number of training competencies delivered in Q2.

26/17.17 **Demand Summary**

Title	Current Year-to-Date	Last Year-to-Date	
Number of fires attended - BCP Council	310	344	
Number of special services incidents attended - BCP Council	267	265	
Number of incidents attended which turned out to be false alarms - BCP Council	268	468	

26/17.18 The quarterly data for the Demand Summary was discussed as set out in the dashboard. In response to a question from the Chair, Officers confirmed that the significant reduction in the number of incidents attended which turned out to be false alarms was largely a factor of increased call challenging by members of the Control team and their requirement that callers confirm the circumstances surrounding a fire alarm actuation. This had the effect of freeing up crews that would otherwise, in many cases, be attending fire alarm actuation incidents that proved to be false.

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26/17.19 Officers presented a deep dive into accidental dwelling fires and home fire safety visits. In response to a query from Cllr Weight regarding how the areas that would be the focus of a deep dive were to be selected in the future, Officers advised that Members were welcome to identify figures of interest within the dashboard and to advise Officers of their interest in these matters being expanded upon at a future LPS meeting.

26/17.20 Cllr Weight asked whether the LPS dashboards could be more clearly labelled to show that the most recent figure was the year-to-date figure.

26/17.21 ACTION: That the chart view in the dashboard be updated to state clearly that the most recent figures were for the year to date.

26/17.22 Members expressed their interest in the content of the Service's internal dashboards and asked whether access to any of the dashboards that were relevant to their roles as members of the LPS Committees could be provided.

26/17.23 ACTION: That Officers investigate whether Members could be given access to any relevant internal dashboard operated by the Service, an example of which had been presented during the meeting.

26/17.24 Members were provided with an update on the system for triaging home fire safety visit referrals, which had been in operation since January 2026. Crews were largely handling lower risk cases, freeing up capacity for the Home Fire Safety Team to conduct visits at high-risk and very high-risk premises. Crews were carrying out follow-ups with individuals that they had visited, ensuring a level of continuity and approachability.

26/17.25 **Presentation**

26/17.26 The Officers provided a presentation on the Service's engagement in Quarter 1. This included community engagement, multi-agency exercises and notable incidents attended.

26/17.27 Cllr Weight enquired as to how Firefighter kit that had been exposed to contaminants was handled after an incident, and how Firefighters were resupplied with new kit to allow them to continue to operate safely. Officers explained that Firefighters were able to send dirty or contaminated kit away for cleaning and to receive a new set within a day. This would not be a specific set belonging to the Firefighter, as the Service had moved away from a model of individual kit ownership in order to ensure that Firefighters could always have a clean set available.

26/17.28 Cllr Richard Biggs highlighted increased media and public awareness of Firefighters potentially becoming overheated in their kit, on account of the summer's very hot weather. Officers advised that sets of lightweight Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) were due to be brought into the Service as part of the regular cycle of kit refreshes. Expediting the introduction of lightweight PPE was being considered by Officers due to the weather conditions in the year to date and predicted future conditions.

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Members noted that the practicalities of needing to be able to store Firefighter kit in the cab of an appliance were limiting in terms of the number of variations of kit that could be carried. Members were advised that the requirements for Firefighters to wear their full sets of PPE were relaxed in line with their proximity to the active firefighting front, in acknowledgment of the fact that the full kit could become very warm.

26/17.29 The Chair asked whether Officers were aware of any plans from the government to introduce greater national standardisation to the fire and rescue sector, in order to bolster response in times of significant demand. Officers informed Members of the formation of a national burn team that would proactively remove high-risk vegetation to lessen instances of fire in the open and wildfire. Additionally, certain drone technology was being made available out of national resources.

26/17.30 Officers provided an update on the status of recruitment efforts, and the work being done to free up capacity at the training centres so as to allow them to deliver more mandatory competency training and assessments.

26/17.31 In response to a question from Cllr Weight, Officers advised that instances where a Firefighter's training took longer than anticipated were generally due to an issue arising in the process. Members received an update on the work that was being undertaken to ensure that Firefighter availability was being utilised in the most efficient possible way, taking into account historical incident data and patterns to indicate where availability was needed.

26/17.32 Officers delivered an update on incidents at derelict premises within BCP and notified Members that the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) operated an antisocial behaviour forum that was undertaking some work around protecting these premises.

26/17.33 The Chair thanked the Officers for the presentation.

26/17.34 RESOLVED: Members scrutinised and noted the performance for quarter 1 2026.

26/18 Matters raised by Members (agreed with the Chair)

26/18.1 There were no matters raised by Members.

26/19 Date of Next meeting

26/19.1 The Chair confirmed the date of the next Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee meeting as 18 November 2026 from 10.00am in Room 206 at BCP Council Civic Centre, Bourne Avenue, Bournemouth.

The meeting closed at 11:16am.

Signed: ----------

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