Item 26/25

DORSET & WILTSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

DRAFT Minutes of the Wiltshire Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee held at 10:00am on 27 August 2026 at the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Salisbury.

Members present:
Cllr Boaz Barry
Cllr Matt Bragg
Cllr Brian Dalton
Cllr Andrew Davis
Cllr Paul Oatway
Cllr Paul Sample

Officer attendance:
Area Manager (AM), Bradley Stevens
Group Manager (GM), Dave Slawinski
Group Manager (GM), Shaun Milton
Democratic Services Manager, Alex Cooper
Democratic Services Manager, David Shaw

26/11 Election of Chair

26/11.1 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.

26/11.2 Cllr Paul Oatway nominated Cllr Andrew Davis for the role of Chair. Cllr Boaz Barry seconded the nomination.

26/11.3 Cllr Brian Dalton nominated Cllr Paul Sample for the role of Chair. Cllr Matt Bragg seconded the nomination.

26/11.4 There were an equal number of votes for both Cllr Davis and Cllr Sample to be appointed as Chair of the Wiltshire Local Performance and Scrutiny (LPS) Committee. Accordingly, the Democratic Services Manager drew lots for the role of Chair, in line with Standing Order 48.2. As a result of the drawing of lots, Cllr Paul Sample was elected as Chair of the Committee for the 2026/27 municipal year.

26/11.5 RESOLVED: That Cllr Paul Sample be elected as Chair of the Wiltshire Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee for the 2026/27 municipal year.

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26/12 Welcome

26/12.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Members and Officers.

26/13 Apologies

26/13.1 There were no apologies for absence from Members. Apologies were received from Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) Darren Langdown.

26/14 Code of Conduct and Declarations of Interests

26/14.1 The Chair asked the meeting for any disclosures of pecuniary interests under the Localism Act. There were no disclosures.

26/15 Public questions

26/15.1 There were no members of the public present, and no public questions had been received.

26/16 Review and approve minutes of the Wiltshire Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 26 February 2026

26/16.1 The Chair asked Members to review and approve the minutes from the previous meeting.

26/16.2 RESOLVED: That the minutes be confirmed without amendment and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

26/17 Action progress report

26/17.1 The Democratic Services Manager referred to action 376 from the meeting of the Committee held on 26 February 2026 and reported that the Prevention Team compiled an annual report containing detail relating to the home fire safety visits undertaken by the Prevention Team and Firefighters, and that this report would be made available to the Committee when it had been produced for the year. Action 376 was to remain in progress.

26/17.2 Regarding action 377, it was reported that the Committee's congratulations had been passed to the Learning and Operational Development Team for the increases in the level of competencies seen in breathing apparatus, casualty care and driving in previous quarters. Action 377 therefore was closed.

26/17.3 RESOLVED: Members noted that action 376 remained in progress and that action 377 was closed.

26/18 Performance Monitoring and Briefing

26/18.1 Area Manager (AM), Bradley Stevens, Group Manager (GM), Dave Slawinski 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:

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

26/18.2 **Priority 1 - Help you to make safer and healthier choices**.

26/18.3

Title	Current Year-to-Date	Last Year-to-Date
Number of accidental dwelling fires - Wiltshire Council	60	45
Number of home fire safety visits Quarterly - Wiltshire Council	465	Not Applicable
Number of safeguarding referrals from DWFRS - Wiltshire Council	61	Not Applicable

26/18.4 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.

26/18.5 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.

26/18.6 In response to the Chair, Members confirmed that they were supportive of the high-level presentation format introduced by the Officers and would welcome further such updates at future Committee meetings.

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26/18.7 The Officers reported that there had been a year-on-year improvement in the average response time to properties with sleeping risk from 14.01 minutes to 11.34 minutes in the current year to date. The average response time to other properties had improved from 12.36 minutes to 12.07 minutes in the current year-to-date. Response times to Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) had improved from 13.51 minutes last year to this point to 13.00 minutes in the current year-to-date. Officers advised Members that expansion of on-call Firefighter availability in Wiltshire may lead to increases in response times, as a combination of more traffic on the road and those on-call staff being pulled from a wider area would both increase the time it took Firefighters to reach their stations.

26/18.8 The number of accidental dwelling fires in the current year-to-date was 60, which was an increase over the 45 such fires in the previous year at the end of Q1. The number of deliberate fires had fallen significantly from 114 to 54 in the year-to-date and Officers advised Members that this was the result of ongoing prevention work with landowners and the attendance of crews at known fire hotspots to provide visibility and deterrence. It was reported that there would be a spike in the number of deliberate fires in Q2, in spite of the prevention work that had taken place, due to the impact of the very hot and dry weather.

26/18.9 The number of fire-related injuries requiring hospital treatment, and those stemming from accidental dwelling fires, remained low overall. The Service had attended 68 RTCs in the Wiltshire area during Q1, which was the same number as in the corresponding quarter last year.

26/18.10 The number of home fire safety visits that had been undertaken in the year-to-date was 465. 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.

26/18.11 Cllr Paul Oatway enquired as to whether the 10.00-minute response time target to properties with sleeping risk was set by the Service or derived from national targets or guidance. The Officers advised that the Service had set this target for itself and had utilised all relevant data points to determine an appropriate response time target. The Service was pushing for national response time targets. It was noted that the Service began the response time clock when a call was received, rather than when the crews arrived on station, as in other services. The Officers reminded Members that key Service priorities were to keep Firefighters safe and to increase on-call availability. Both of these aims had an impact on response time and the balance of these factors against response targets was something that was continually under review.

26/18.12 In response to a question from Cllr Boaz Barry regarding the practical requirements that underpinned a reduction in response times, the Officers advised that targeted investment was the biggest factor. For example, moving stations from on-call to day-crewed where information suggested that this would deliver significant availability and response time

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improvements would have a large impact on response times. It was noted that the Service had gathered a significant amount of data that would inform decisions about response time targets as part of the station reviews work.

26/18.13 Regarding the increase in safeguarding referrals, Members were advised that the Service was moving away from e-learning on this subject and towards a more engaging and interactive suite of training around safeguarding.

26/18.14 **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 - Wiltshire Council	333	255
Automatic fire alarms which result in a false alarm – non-domestic premises - Wiltshire Council (year to date)	99	76
Number of business fire safety checks undertaken by crews - Wiltshire Council	45	Not Applicable

26/18.15 The Officers reported that the number of automatic fire alarms which resulted in a false alarm in the current year-to-date had numbered 333 in domestic premises and 99 in non-domestic premises. Both figures were an increase over the number of these false alarms at the same stage in the previous year. The Service was undertaking call challenging to ensure that there was a suitable reason for a crew to attend in response to an automatic fire alarm call.

26/18.16 The number of fires in commercial premises in the quarter had fallen to 31, compared with 34 in the same period last year. The Officers advised that this reflected the fact that the Service's call challenging was effective and was not increasing fire risk.

26/18.17 With reference to business fire safety checks, Officers advised that wholetime 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 aided the fire safety team.

26/18.18 The Officers advised in response to a question from Cllr Andrew Davis that the Business Fire Safety team would call business owners and announce their plan to visit a premises where a complex or high-risk case was

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anticipated. Crews may take a local approach and visit businesses by going street to street or by focusing on an area of their station ground. The Service was working to support and encourage business owners to participate in these checks. It was acknowledged that there was some wariness around these checks from businesses.

26/18.19 Cllr Matt Bragg enquired about the long-term rise in non-domestic property fires, despite the reduction in the most recent quarter when compared to the same period last year. The Officers informed Members that these premises included sheds, barns and similar outdoor structures that were highly susceptible to fire risk during periods of extreme heat and dryness.

26/18.20 Cllr Bragg asked about any outstanding enforcement notices within Wiltshire. The Officers took an action to provide this figure to Members, following consultation with the Protection team.

26/18.21 **ACTION: That Officers contact the Fire Safety team in order to provide Members with an update on the number of currently outstanding enforcement notices within the Wiltshire area, and the compliance dates for those notices.**

26/18.22 **Priority 3 - Be there when you need us**

26/18.23 The quarterly data for Priority 3 was discussed as set out in the dashboard.

26/18.24 **ACTION: That Officers pass the thanks of the Wiltshire LPS Committee on to the training team for their continued delivery of a high volume of training in core competencies.**

26/18.25 **Demand Summary**

Title	Current Year-to-Date	Last Year-to-Date	
Number of fires attended - Wiltshire Council	285	366	
Number of special services incidents attended - Wiltshire Council	305	316	
Number of incidents attended which turned out to be false alarms - Wiltshire Council	280	391	

26/18.26 The quarterly data for the Demand Summary was discussed as set out in the dashboard.

26/18.27 Members were advised that the number of training competencies that were reaching the 90% target was likely to fall in the next quarter due to training course cancellations brought about by the Service's declaration of a major incident during that period. The Officers further advised that the

Service was transitioning towards a trained-to-risk model in which training certification and renewal requirements would be tailored to the risks that an individual was likely to encounter most frequently.

26/18.28 **Presentation**

26/18.29 The Officers provided a presentation on the Service's engagement in quarter 1. This included community engagement, multi-agency exercises and notable incidents attended.

26/18.30 Members discussed the potential for Wiltshire Council's Area Board areas to be fed into the Service's internal dashboards so that Wiltshire residents could be presented with Service data that aligned to their community areas, rather than being organised by station ground or according to the other ways in which the Service generally considered data. It was suggested that Wiltshire Members could take this information to their Area Board meetings in order to provide a Fire Service update. Officers undertook to discuss this proposal with the Head of Data and Analytics, in order to determine whether this could be implemented.

26/18.31 **ACTION: That Officers investigate the possibility of Wiltshire Area Board areas being fed into the internal dashboard system, so as to produce a dashboard view focused on community areas that Members could more easily digest at Area Board or community level.**

26/18.32 In response to a question from the Chair regarding lithium-ion battery fires, Officers advised that the Service was seeing an increase in the number of fires caused by these batteries. Members were asked to note that this increase did coincide with a significant increase in the number of devices containing these batteries that were coming onto the market and into homes. The Service was seeing that a large proportion of these fires were linked to tampering with, or improper disposal of, these batteries. The Service had previously produced informative leaflets around safe battery storage and disposal.

26/18.33 Cllr Barry enquired about the safe disposal of vapes, and the education work that the Service did on this subject. The Officers advised Members that a significant area of concern was the use of vapes in bed, in much the same way that smoking in bed had been a highly targeted fire risk in the past. Officers undertook to confirm with the Service's education team what they provided in terms of fire safety as it concerned vapes.

26/18.34 **ACTION: That Members be provided with an update on the prevention and education work that the Service did around the use and disposal of vapes from a fire safety perspective.**

26/18.35 In response to a question from the Chair regarding increased public and media 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

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Officers due to the weather conditions in the year to date and predicted future conditions. 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.

26/18.36 In response to a query from Cllr Bragg about the reason that crews from Wilton Fire Station had chosen to conduct a training exercise simulating evacuation from a hospital, the Officers informed Members that hospitals presented a very high risk to the Service, on account of the complexity of operating in these settings and because of the difficulty that some residents may have in evacuating or being evacuated. Members noted that Wilton Fire Station would almost certainly respond to an incident at Salisbury Hospital, alongside crews from Salisbury, meaning that this form of training exercise was particularly relevant.

26/18.37 The Chair thanked the Officers for the presentation.

26/18.38 RESOLVED: Members scrutinised and noted the performance for quarter 1 2026.

26/19 Matters raised by Members (agreed with the Chair)

26/19.1 There were no additional matters raised by Members.

26/20 Date of Next meeting

26/20.1 The Chair confirmed the date of the next Wiltshire Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee meeting as Thursday 26 November 2026 at 10:00am in the meeting room at Chippenham Fire Station, 52 Dallas Road, Chippenham, SN15 1LE.

26/20.2 The Chair, all Members, and Officers thanked David Shaw, Democratic Services Manager, for his work in supporting the Fire Authority and the Local Performance and Scrutiny meetings over the last five years. Members wished David well in his retirement.

The meeting closed at 11:50.

*Signed*_____

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