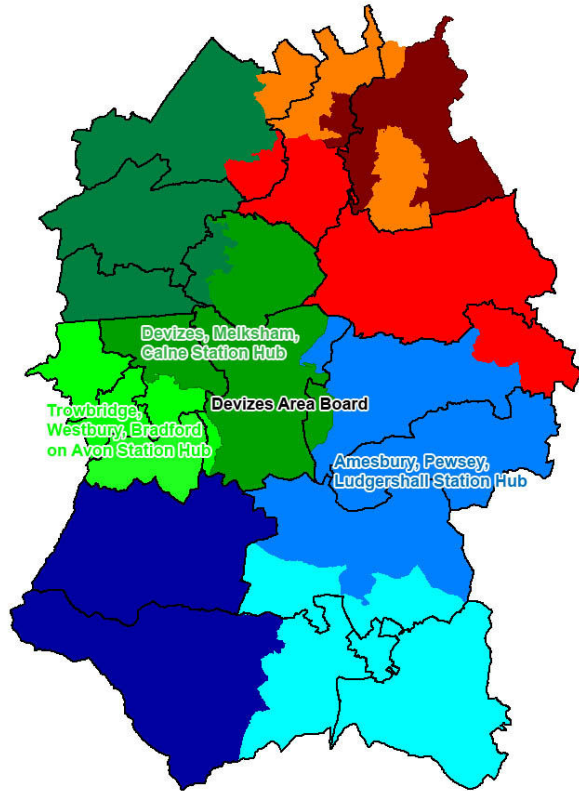




Briefing report for Calne; Devizes and Melksham Community Area Boards



Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service has grouped together neighbouring fire stations into station hubs, to work more effectively and efficiently, supporting each other to improve the service we provide.

Responding to incidents:

Your Area Board's / Locality's communities immediate emergency response will be provided by staff at these stations and where necessary additional support from staff and specialist equipment from other stations.

Prevention work:

Staff from other departments also provide the community with specialist services giving fire safety and road safety advice and interventions such as talks and visits.

Protection work:

Specialist staff provide expert knowledge, give advice and undertake enforcement action working very closely with the planning authorities to keep communities safe from fire.

In an **emergency dial 999**, for other non urgent matters you can either visit our website: www.wiltsfire.gov.uk or contact the following people:

| | <u>Manager / Department</u> | <u>Telephone</u> | <u>email</u> |
|--|--|------------------|--|
| Operational matters | Station Manager - Darren Nixon, Devizes, Melksham, Calne Station Hub | 07860 345294 | darren.nixon@wiltsfire.gov.uk |
| Partnership and community engagement issues | Michael Franklin (Wiltshire Council Area) | 07919 306037 | mike.franklin@wiltsfire.gov.uk |
| Home fire safety visits and for talks and visits | Community safety department | 0800 389 7849 | www.wiltsfire.gov.uk and then complete the on line request |

Significant step taken on road to combination

The Combination Order to bring together Wiltshire & Swindon Combined Fire Authority and Dorset Fire Authority has been submitted to the Secretary of State, the Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP.

Subject to a period of consultation, and the Secretary of State finding no need for an enquiry into the merits of merger, it is expected that the Combination Order will be made in February 2015. The required legislation will then be passed by the end of March 2015, allowing the new Fire Authority to come into being on 1 April 2016.

At meetings of the two existing Fire Authorities 'Dorset and Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Authority' was adopted as the name of the new administrative body.

A key concern raised during the public consultation process was that there should be parity in the number of Elected Members representing Wiltshire and Swindon, and those representing Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole, and this has been resolved quite amicably. The new Fire & Rescue Authority will have 30 members, with 15 from each geographical county – although this can be reviewed by the new body in the future.

Shadow governance arrangements for the transition to the new Authority have also been agreed, with defined Terms of Reference adopted by Elected Members in both Wiltshire and Dorset.

At the heart of the new combined Fire & Rescue Authority will be a purpose-built community safety centre, which will also act as a 'virtual headquarters'.

The Government has granted £5.54 million from its Fire Transformation Fund to support the construction of this facility, with money also available to align ICT between the existing Services and support other transition costs.

A project team is now scoping potential sites and we are also liaising with partners, including other emergency services and local authorities, to see what additional benefits can be realised through this scheme.

Reminder to get chimneys swept regularly

Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service is reminding local householders to make sure that their chimneys are fire-safe. The Service has attended nine chimney fires in the last week – tying in with the weather being so much colder.

How often you should maintain your chimney will depend on the fuel you burn:

- Smokeless coals - at least once a year
- Wood - up to four times a year
- Bituminous coal - twice a year
- Oil - once a year
- Gas - once a year

If you have a real fire, you should always:

- Use a fire guard to protect against flying sparks from hot embers;
- Make sure embers are properly put out before you go to bed; and
- Keep chimneys and flues clean and well maintained.

Properties with thatched roofs are particularly vulnerable in the event of a chimney fire. Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service has developed a thatch information pack for householders, which includes a range of advice on making chimneys as safe as possible.

Safety reminder about domestic appliances

Letting tumble driers, washing machines or dishwashers run unattended, either overnight or while you're out of the house, can be dangerous, as fires can easily start if a fault develops and the appliance overheats.

In January, a family from the Chippenham area had a lucky escape when their tumble drier caught fire after being left to run overnight.

Domestic appliances are often kept downstairs in a house, so leaving them running when you go to bed creates a real risk that you could be trapped upstairs if a fire were to start. It is also vital to have working smoke detectors, and to test them every week – that way, if the worst does happen, you should be able to raise the alarm and get to safety

The Fire & Rescue Service's advice is:

- Make sure there is at least one smoke alarm on every level of your home;
- Fit smoke alarms on landings, in hallways, and near bedrooms. They can also be beneficial in rooms with electric heaters or other items of potential risk;
- Test your smoke alarms regularly by pushing the button – ideally on a weekly basis;
- Check that your smoke alarms are no more than ten years old, and replace if necessary; and
- Make sure that any elderly or vulnerable relatives or neighbours also have working smoke alarms.

In addition, the Service recommends having carbon monoxide alarms fitted in your home, and these should also be checked regularly.

Some households may qualify for a free home fire safety check from Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service. To request a pack or a visit, call 0800 389 7849 or visit www.wiltshire.gov.uk

PLEASE QUOTE REFERRAL REFERENCE R121

Michael Franklin

Partnerships & Community Engagement Manager(Wiltshire Council area)

February 2015

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

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