



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

**Minutes of the Swindon Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee held at
10:00am on 30 November 2022 at Westlea Fire Station, The Chesters, Stonehill
Green, Westlea, SN5 7DB**

Members present:

Cllr Russell Holland (Chair)
Cllr Brian Ford
Cllr Kevin Small

Officer attendance:

Director of Community Safety, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO), Andy Cole
Area Manager (AM), Darren Langdown
Area Manager (AM), Marc House
Group Manager (GM), Neil Tidball
Partnerships Officer, Perry Payne
Democratic Services Officer, David Shaw

22/30 Welcome

22/30.1 Cllr Holland welcomed Members and Officers to the meeting.

22/31 Apologies

22/31.1 No apologies were received.

22/32 Code of Conduct and Declaration of Interests

22/32.1 The Chair asked the meeting for any disclosures of pecuniary interests under the Localism Act. There were no disclosures.

22/33 Public Questions

22/33.1 There were no members of the public present and no public questions had been received.

22/34 Review and approve minutes of the Swindon Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 31 August 2022

22/34.1 The Chair asked Members to review and approve the minutes from the last meeting.

22/34.2 Arising out of consideration of Minute 27.5, Cllr Brian Ford enquired about area schools that had declined the request for a visit by the Service to promote its safety messages. Group Manager (GM) Neil Tidball responded that schools were now becoming more receptive to visits following the easing of Covid restrictions. Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) Andy Cole added that the education offering had been amended and this would be covered by the presentation under the item on Action Progress Report post.

22/34.3 **RESOLVED: That the minutes be confirmed without amendment and be signed by the Chair as a correct record.**

22/35 Action Progress report

22/35.1 GM Tidball provided an update to the Committee on the following action:

22/35.2 Action 359: That Partnerships Officer, Perry Payne and Area Manager (AM) Marc House (protection and prevention), be invited to a future meeting to present an overview of their work to the Committee. Partnerships Officer, Perry Payne and AM House, were present at the meeting and gave an overview of their work to the Committee.

22/35.3 Members commented on points arising from the presentation.

22/35.4 Cllr Kevin Small observed that the number of referrals to the safeguarding team had increased and asked if this was because operational staff were trained to have increased awareness to identify the signs of risk. AM House explained that referrals had been analysed over a two-year period to establish a base line to consider trends such as this.

22/35.5 Cllr Brian Ford asked if the safeguarding training was fit for purpose to consider referrals and raise awareness. ACFO Cole replied that the safeguarding arrangements had been considered by Internal Audit and had been found to be substantial with low level management actions being addressed. There was greater awareness of safeguarding by operational crews, and this was reflected in entries in operational incident logs.

22/35.6 In reply to a question from Members, the Officers explained how safeguarding referrals were processed by the Service, including those that arose outside of daytime working hours. It was noted that the Service was also represented on the local safeguarding board.

22/35.7 In consideration of road safety education packages, Members welcomed the suggestion by ACFO Cole to view a 'Save Drive, Stay Alive' presentation. Cllr Ford commented that he had attend a SPECTRA pass out parade that it had been very good.

22/35.8 Members noted that in considering value for money for prevention work, £1 invested on school education led to £19.91 in societal benefit; £1 on Safe and Well led to £5.31 in societal benefit; £1 on Road Safety led to £563 in societal benefit, and £1 on Youth Intervention led to £4.47 in societal benefit. Members observed that the Service carried out excellent work in partnership with others, including education work and youth support, and stated that this should be promoted more through social media. ACFO Cole commented that such work was non statutory which was at risk when considering the Authority's financial position.

22/35.9 **RESOLVED: Members agreed that action number 359 was complete.**

22/36 Performance monitoring and briefing quarter 2

22/36.1 GM Tidball presented to Members the Performance monitoring and briefing for quarter 2, which covered the three priority areas overseen by this Committee. A link to the presentation is [here](#).

22/36.2 **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.

22/36.3 **Priority 1 - Help you to make safer and healthier choices.**

22/36.4 GM Tidball highlighted that operational crews at wholetime stations now undertook lower-level fire safety inspections known as Business Fire Safety checks on non-complex commercial premises, such as an office, shops or small industrial units. In addition, officer attendance at external meetings was being given consideration to assess the value in attendance, with attendance at some meetings being on an exception basis in the future.

22/36.5 Cllr Small commented that in respect of anti-social behaviour, there had been a reduction in nuisance from car gatherings in his local area.

22/36.6 In reply to a question from Cllr Ford, AM House explained how the 150 Safe and Well visits in the quarter had been targeted. Visits were data led, with coordination between partners to achieve a collaborative approach to maximise the use of specialist expertise and to avoid duplication between agencies. ACFO Cole added that the visits had to be of value to keep people safe.

22/36.7 **Priority 2 - Protect you and the environment from harm**

22/36.8 GM Tidball highlighted that there had been no prosecutions within the quarter and that the number of calls to automatic fire alarms had increased, and that all calls were scrutinised.

22/36.9 **Priority 3 - Be there when you need us**

22/36.10 The Committee noted that there had been an increase in response times during the quarter due to crews moving between calls, and due to increases in traffic congestion, in what had been a very demanding period. Appliance availability had been 100% for wholetime crews and 60.5% for on-call crews. Work was being undertaken to increase the availability for on-call, with Swindon recruiting 22 new on-call firefighters and moves to reduce the qualification period by means of a development hub. In answer to a question from Cllr Ford, it was explained that although firefighters had left the Service, there had been more joining, which would lead to an improved performance.

22/36.11 GM Tidball continued that wholetime competence were within parameters.

22/36.12 It was noted that in the quarter there had been 180 fires in the open, compared with 34 in the previous year's quarter 2, which represented a 429% increase. In reply to Members' questions, ACFO Cole explained the Service's access to private helicopters and military aid to fight fires in the open.

22/36.13 ACFO Cole stated that information on mutual aid with surrounding fire and rescue services would be provided to Cllr Small following his question on cross border reciprocal arrangements.

22/36.14 **RESOLVED: Members scrutinised and noted the performance for quarter 2.**

22/37 Matters raised by Members (agreed with Chair)

22/37.1 There were no matters raised by Members.

22/38 Date of Next Meeting

22/38.1 The Chair confirmed the date of the next Swindon Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee meeting as Wednesday 1 March 2023 at 10:00am.

The meeting closed at 11:05am

Signed: _____