



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

**Minutes of the Wiltshire Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee held at
10:00am on 26 February 2026 at Trowbridge Fire Station, Hilpertown Road,
Trowbridge, BA14 7JB**

Members present:

Cllr Paul Sample (Chair)
Cllr Matt Bragg
Cllr Andrew Davis
Cllr Paul Oatway

Officer attendance:

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

26/01 Welcome

26/01.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Members and officers.

26/02 Apologies

26/02.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Boaz Barry and Cllr Brian Dalton.

26/03 Code of Conduct and Declarations of Interests

26/03.1 The Chair asked the meeting for any disclosures of pecuniary interests under the Localism Act. There were no disclosures.

26/04 Public questions

26/04.1 Dr Nigel Kieser read two questions submitted by himself regarding Bradford on Avon Fire Station, as set out in Appendix A to the Minutes.

26/04.2 The Chair stated that a written response would be provided within 28 days from the officers and that the questions would be considered as part of the station reviews consultation process and be forwarded to all Members on the Committee.

26/04.3 RESOLVED: Members noted the public questions.

26/05 Review and approve minutes of the Wiltshire Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 27 November 2025

26/05.1 The Chair asked Members to review and approve the minutes from the previous meeting.

26/05.2 RESOLVED: That the minutes be confirmed without amendment and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

26/06 Action progress report

26/06.1 The Democratic Services Manager reported that no actions had been taken at the meeting on 27 November 2025 and that there were none outstanding from previous meetings.

26/06.2 RESOLVED: Members noted that there were no actions outstanding.

26/07 Performance monitoring and briefing

26/07.1 Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO), Response, Darren Langdown, 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 3, 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 year to date referred to quarter 3 – 1 October 2025 to 31 December 2025 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.

26/07.2 **Priority 1 - Help you to make safer and healthier choices.**

26/07.3

Title	Current Year-to-Date	Last Year-to-Date
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Number of accidental dwelling fires - Wiltshire Council	50	42
Number of home fire safety visits Quarterly - Wiltshire Council	532	Not Applicable
Number of safeguarding referrals from DWFRS - Wiltshire Council	67	Not Applicable

- 26/07.4 AM Stevens reported that at future meetings it was proposed to consider a topic in greater depth and Members were encouraged to suggest items in advance of the meeting for consideration.
- 26/07.5 The officers reported that there had been a slight increase in response times to domestic properties with a sleeping risk and the possible reasons for this were explained to Members. These included issues arising with the on-call model, the length of time on-call took to reach Fire Stations and the methods for recording response times compared with other Fire and Rescue Services. The increases in response times had been a trend throughout the country, and the Service was working with the National Fire Chiefs Council on a national framework. The officers would monitor the reasons for the slight increase in response times to seek improvements.
- 26/07.6 In reply to questions from Members, the officers explained that on-call firefighters being called to a Fire Station to respond to an incident had to abide by the Road Traffic Act, as exceptions were only allowable to those travelling on blue-lights. Different ways of working the on-call model were being considered by the officer On-call Steering Group, for example in encouraging recruitment and revising application tests to make them more relevant to the role.
- 26/07.7 In considering accidental dwelling fires, the officers reported that the highest incidence was through cooking in kitchens, but there was a rise in lithium-ion battery fires, for which national guidance was being sought. It was intended to add this level of information to the dashboard report as more data was obtained.
- 26/07.8 The Committee debated the issues arising from lithium-ion battery fires in waste collection and disposal, including rechargeable vapes and mobile phone batteries. The officers explained the actions taken to publicise safe storage and recycling of lithium-ion batteries via leaflets and home fire safety talks and the work of the Protection Team liaising with the Environment Agency and local Councils in providing advice. It was stated that the Service had specially trained Waste Fire Tactical Advisors.
- 26/07.9 The officers informed Members that some elements of reporting via the dashboard were being reviewed. For example, a deliberate fire was now defined as being malicious, and therefore the number of occurrences might

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fall. In addition, the numbers of injuries could now include cases of smoke inhalation as an ambulance would be called. The officers stated that it would be clarified which data was included in the category of injury and fire related accidental injuries. It was also clarified that the number of fire fatalities and the causes would be contained within the coroner's report.

26/07.10 Arising out of consideration for the dashboard data for Priority 1, Members asked that at the next meeting of the Committee additional detail be provided on the Home Fire Safety visits that were provided by the Prevention Team and those that were provided by firefighters at Fire Stations and the different risk levels that were taken into consideration. The officers explained that many referrals came from partner agencies and were risk rated so that those with the highest risk received a priority visit.

26/07.11 ACTION: That at the next meeting of the Committee additional detail be provided on the Home Fire Safety visits that were provided by the Prevention Team and those that were provided by firefighters at Fire Stations and the different risk levels that were taken into consideration.

26/07.12 **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 - Wiltshire Council	311	361
Automatic fire alarms which result in a false alarm - non domestic premises - Wiltshire Council (year to date)	91	148
Number of business fire safety checks undertaken crews - Wiltshire Council	40	Not Applicable

26/07.13 **Priority 3 - Be there when you need us**

26/07.14 The quarterly data for Priority 3 was discussed as set out in the dashboard.

26/07.15 The Chair asked that the congratulations of the Committee be forwarded to the Training Team for their hard work in achieving the high levels of competencies by firefighters in breathing apparatus, casualty care and driving.

26/07.16 ACTION: That the congratulations of the Committee be forwarded to the Training Team for their hard work in achieving the high levels of competencies by firefighters in breathing apparatus, casualty care and driving.

26/07.17 **Demand Summary**

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Title	Current Year-to-Date	Last Year-to-Date	
Number of fires attended - Wiltshire Council	208	174	
Number of special services incidents attended - Wiltshire Council	1001	1066	
Number of incidents attended which turned out to be false alarms - Wiltshire Council	433	481	

26/07.18 The quarterly data for the Demand Summary was discussed as set out in the dashboard.

26/07.19 **Presentation**

26/07.20 The officers provided a presentation on the Service's engagement in quarter 3. This included community engagement, multi-agency exercises and notable incidents attended.

26/07.21 The Chair thanked the officers for the presentation.

26/07.22 RESOLVED: Members scrutinised and noted the performance for quarter 3 2026

26/08 Matters raised by Members (agreed with the Chair)

26/08.1 There were no additional matters raised by Members.

26/09 Date of Next meeting

26/09.1 The Chair confirmed the date of the next Wiltshire Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee meeting as Thursday 27 August 2026 at 10:00am.

The meeting closed at 11.20.

Signed: _____

Wiltshire Local Performance & Scrutiny Committee meeting – 26 February 2026**26/10 Public Questions****26/10.1 Public Questions - Dr Nigel Keiser:****Question One**

Over the last 3 years, crews from Bradford on Avon fire station have attended several incidents at abandoned underground stone mines in and around the town, involving fires and/or rescues of persons. The most recent of these incidents, in September 2025, involved a 9-hour long multi-agency response with specialist rescue teams called upon from as far afield as Mansfield. Given the ongoing risk posed by these abandoned mines, the crew from Bradford on Avon have been highly proactive in establishing relationships with the relevant responsible persons (mine owners and managers) and with key external stakeholders (such as the town council), in gathering relevant information such as mine plans to assist with the emergency response at future incidents, and have also been lobbying the relevant departments within DWFRS to write operating procedures for rescues from these sorts of sites to reduce risk to FRS personnel. What assurance can the committee provide that the specialist knowledge and relationships built up by the crew at Bradford on Avon will not be lost in the event on station closure?

Response:

Since April 2019 Bradford on Avon has been involved in 3 sub-surface incidents (2 fire below ground and 1 release of persons). The incident you describe was recorded as fire below ground by the incident commander. The incident lasted 11.5 hours, of which Bradford on Avon was in attendance for 5. Cave and mine rescues are not carried out by the Fire Service. In this case, as it was a mine, the search was carried out by the Mine Rescue team from Mansfield. They booked in attendance around 2350. This was the same time at Bradford on Avon booked mobile returning home station. The Incident Commander maintained liaison with the Mine Rescue team and utilised well exercised JESIP principles. It is the use of these well established and nationally recognised JESIP principles that allows for good inter-agency working and the safe resolution of incident.

Question Two

Flooding is a major concern for the population of Bradford on Avon, with the last major flooding episodes in November 2024 and February 2025 causing severe disruption and making access to parts of the town almost impossible. During severe flooding, all access roads to the town north of the river Avon become impassable at one time or another. Aside from the direct risks associated with flooding, the aforementioned access issues create secondary risks, in terms of the emergency services' ability to reach other types of incidents. The crew at

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Bradford on Avon is level 2 (first responder) water rescue qualified and there are sufficient personnel to mobilise WR2 teams on both sides of the river, even when all the bridges are closed by flooding. The crew have been highly proactive in engaging with the DWFRS risk and resilience departments to ensure on-the-ground risks during flooding are properly understood, and reflected in resilience plans to ensure water rescue equipment and personnel are accessible when and where they are most needed. It is not clear whether this local knowledge has been incorporated into the 2025 water first responder team review, as the findings of this review have not been shared. Furthermore, it is not clear whether there is sufficient resilience in the DWFRS flood response plan for Bradford on Avon to take into account the potential closure of the fire station, with the commensurate loss of infrastructure and water rescue equipment and personnel in the town. What assurances can the Chair provide in this respect?

Response:

It is worth noting flood rescue work is not a statutory duty and as such the Service receives no funding for associated flood work. Since April 2019 Bradford on Avon has attended 7 flood related incidents (property floodings, rescues, assist from vehicle etc.). Specifically in November 2024 Bradford on Avon attended 0 flood related incidents, though there was one incident in Bradford on Avon, which was not attended by Bradford on Avon crew. In February 2025 the crew from Bradford on Avon attended 4 incidents, none of which were flooding related. The review into Water First Responders is being delivered by a separate team. This team is taking a wide ranging view of the demand on this service and is assessing where our Water First Responder teams would be best placed to serve the communities of Dorset and Wiltshire and the number of those teams needed for resilience.