



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

Minutes of the Wiltshire Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee held at 10:00am on 2 March 2023 at the Training & Development Centre, Hopton Industrial Estate, London Road, Devizes.

Members present:

Cllr Pip Ridout (Chair)

Cllr Bob Jones

Cllr Kelvin Nash

Cllr Ashley O'Neill

Cllr Paul Oatway

Officer attendance:

Director of Community Safety, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO), Andy Cole

Area Manager (AM) Darren Langdown

Group Manager (GM), Jim Weston

Democratic Services Officer, David Shaw

23/01 Welcome

23/01.1 Cllr Pip Ridout welcomed Members and Officers to the meeting.

23/02 Apologies

23/02.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Brian Dalton.

23/03 Code of Conduct and Declarations of Interests

23/03.1 The Chair asked the meeting for any disclosures of pecuniary interests under the Localism Act. There were no disclosures.

23/04 Public Questions

23/04.1 There were no members of the public present and no public questions had been received.

23/05 Review and approve minutes of the Wiltshire Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee (LPS) meeting on 1 December 2022

23/05.1 The Chair asked Members to review and approve the minutes from the last meeting.

23/05.2 **RESOLVED: That the minutes be confirmed without amendment and be signed by the Chair as a correct record.**

23/06 Action Progress Report

23/06.1 Area Manager (AM) Darren Langdown provided an update to the Committee on the following action:

23/06.2 Action 360: That the household literature for Safe and Well visits be reviewed to ascertain whether the possibility of the Service receiving a voluntary financial donation could be highlighted from those benefiting from a Safe and Well visit and provision of safety equipment. AM Langdown reported that the action had been raised with Area Manager Marc House (Protection and Prevention) to ascertain if this was something the Service needed to progress. It was agreed that the action was complete.

23/06.3 **RESOLVED: Members agreed that action number 360 was complete.**

23/07 Performance monitoring and briefing quarter 3

23/07.1 Group Manager (GM), Jim Weston presented to Members the Performance monitoring and briefing for quarter 3, which covered the three priority areas overseen by this Committee.

23/07.2 **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.

A link to the presentation can be found [here](#).

23/07.3 **Priority 1 - Help you to make safer and healthier choices.**

23/07.4 GM Weston provided detail on the Services' representation on various boards and partnerships and its contribution to multi-agency working. It was also explained that Wholetime crews continued to conduct low risk fire safety audits and operational staff allocated time to prevention activities such as Safe and Well visits.

- 23/07.5 The Officers highlighted the positive progress that had been made regarding on-call recruitment. As a result of 'Have a go Days' held at stations to advertise the Service, some 39 new starters had commenced employment in the last six months and 77 were currently in the recruitment process. The ongoing action been taken to ensure improvements in on-call availability and included: review of on-call staff's current contract availability so that recruitment could be better targeted at station level to availability gaps; succession planning to maintain availability and support recruitment; targeted recruitment campaigns, and creation of 'development hubs' to support firefighters through development stages and support appliance availability.
- 23/07.6 The Committee enquired if there were any imbalances in service provision within Wiltshire. The Officers explained that in addition to the increases in recruitment, there was also action to increase training for on-call to provide drivers and incident commanders to improve availability further. The development hubs were also effective in retaining firefighters by providing modular units, and the number of leavers of the Service were now less than those joining. The Service was also working in conjunction with South Wales Fire and Rescue Service to streamline the process from recruitment to full competency. Members welcomed the initiatives that were being implemented.
- 23/07.7 In respect of education and youth intervention, in the quarter 4,314 children and young people had received educational input, of which 3,847 had been by way of their main form of education, with 54 schools visited. In reply to a question from Cllr Bob Jones, it was confirmed that no schools had declined a visit. Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) Andy Cole explained that educational visits were made on a risk-based approach, for example based on demographics and incident data. AM Langdown added that educational visits by crews were RAG rated (red, amber, green) based on community maps to identify trends. For example, an incidence of bin fires in an area would lead to schools in the area being visited. In reply to a question from Cllr Kelvin Nash, it was explained that this also applied to other anti-social behaviour with District Commanders identifying trends.
- 23/07.8 Joint road safety education events had been delivered with partners. From September 2022, portable virtuality reality (VR) headsets had been used by the Road Safety Team to support the Safe Drive Stay alive programme, which could be taken to various locations. In reply to a question from Cllr Paul Oatway, GM Weston explained how the Service supported and worked with partners on the alcohol and drugs national campaigns, including sharing social media. Cllr Nash enquired how audiences were targeted for road safety education, and the Officers explained the partnership work of the Strategic Road Safety Partnership, for example with Wiltshire Area Boards, in identifying problems where scheduled and reactionary intervention could take place. The results of the evaluation of the outcomes of the road safety education would be brought to a future Committee meeting.

- 23/07.9 In respect of firesetters, year to date there had been 17 referrals in Wiltshire with two cases currently open. There had been no referrals in the quarter. In answer to a question from the Chair, the Officers explained that causes of fire, including whether it was deliberate, were determined by the Service's Response Support Team.
- 23/07.10 GM Weston informed the Committee that 1687 Safe & Well visits had been completed year to date in Wiltshire. This represented a 12.2% increase compared to the previous year. Across the Service, there had been 1,289 referrals year to date, which represented a 25.6% increase for the same period last year. In reply to a question from Cllr Jones, the Officers gave further detail on the support to households with the cost-of-living crisis that had been received from Electrical Safety First, which was a registered charity working to reduce deaths and injuries caused by electrical accidents. Referrals to the charity were made by the Safe & Well advisors and partner agencies, or by individuals if they met the relevant criteria.
- 23/07.11 **Priority 2 - Protect you and the environment from harm**
- 23/07.12 There had been one Prohibition Notice and one Enforcement Notice in quarter 3. There were no prosecutions during the period.
- 23/07.13 It was noted that in quarter 3, the new strategy for automatic fire alarms at commercial premises delivered cashable savings of £12,502 for on-call attendance and returned 61.2 hours to wholtime stations in Wiltshire.
- 23/07.14 Building regulation consultations and licensing consultations in Wiltshire had been completed as required within statutory timescales.
- 23/07.15 **Priority 3 - Be there when you need us**
- 23/07.16 The average response times were explained by the Officers, which were stated to be generally good. In reply to a question from Cllr Oatway, it was explained that in urban areas it was usually the police that were first to attend an incident.
- 23/07.17 Cllr Ashley O'Neill enquired about the long-term trends of average response times and whether the information provided could be presented graphically to aid understanding. ACFO Cole explained that the six-monthly figures were provided at the meetings of the full Authority, and additional information could be included at LPS meetings to illustrate trends graphically in future.
- 23/07.18 In reply to additional Members' questions, ACFO Cole provided further context on the response figures, explaining what constituted a sleeping risk and survivability. The data presented to the Committee would be reviewed to improve its understanding and presentation, for example adding quantities and variation from the average.

23/07.19 The Officers provided detail on appliance availability, with Wholetime appliance availability being 98.4% in quarter 3 and on-call 53.8%. The measures taken on recruitment and retention would improve future on-call availability. The Committee discussed appliance availability at various Wiltshire stations, and it was noted that there were action plans to improve performance where required and Members could scrutinise performance.

23/07.20 The figures for operational competence were provided.

23/07.21 The Committee discussed incidents attended in the quarter, including a canal boat fire. It was noted that the use of what3words was useful in identifying the location of a canal boat and that the Water Safety Team worked with canal trusts to improve safety, although the number of incidents was low. The saving of a man's life following his collapse at Malmesbury Football Club by the local crew on their night drill was also highlighted.

23/07.22 **Demand summary**

23/07.23 Details were provided on the number of false alarms from automatic fire detection equipment in the quarter – 346 (last year to date 347), the number of accidental dwelling fires – 43 (44), the number of deliberate fires – 34 (66) and the number of special service incidents attended 1,246 (1104).

23/07.24 The Chair thanked the officers for the presentation.

23/07.25 **RESOLVED: Members scrutinised and noted the performance for quarter 3.**

23/08 Matters raised by Members (agreed with Chair)

23/08.1 There were no additional matters arising.

23/09 Date of next meeting

23/09.1 The Chair confirmed the date of the next Wiltshire Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee meeting as 1 June 2023 at 10:00am.

The meeting closed at 11:25

Signed: _____