



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

Minutes of the Dorset Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee held on 23 February 2023, 10.00am at the Conference Room at the Poundbury offices, Peverell Avenue West, Poundbury, Dorset, DT1 3SU.

Members present:

Cllr Pete Barrow (Chair)
Cllr Richard Biggs
Cllr Rebecca Knox

Officer attendance:

Director of Community Safety, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO), Andy Cole
Area Manager (AM), Darren Langdown
Group Manager (GM), Antony Bholah
Democratic Services Officer, David Shaw

23/01 Welcome

23/01.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Members and officers.

23/02 Apologies

23/02.1 No apologies were received.

23/03 Code of Conduct and Declaration 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.

23/04.2 **RESOLVED: Members noted that there were no public questions.**

23/05 Review and approve minutes of the Dorset Local Performance and

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Scrutiny (LPS) Committee meeting held on 24 November 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 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 355 - In consultation with Cllr Rebecca Knox and the Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee Chairs, review officer attendance at constituent councils with Local Area Board meetings. AM Langdown reported that Station Managers and Group Managers had now completed a review of all meetings attended by the Service which had led to prioritisation and focusing. The Service would in future attend statutory and other meetings where high value could be added. Where value was more limited attendance would be on an annual or exception basis. The Chair observed that it remained important for the Service to understand the community it served and to know its public. It was agreed that this action was complete.
- 23/06.3 AM Langdown continued that as part of the above review, Wholetime Watch Managers had become more empowered to undertake a wide range of duties to offer more to communities in terms of prevention. This was moving away from an approach of meeting targets and was more workforce led. The proposals were aimed to be implemented from the 1 April 2023. The Committee agreed with the Chair's request that a presentation be brought to the November LPS meeting on this topic with a Watch Manager invited to be present.
- 23/06.4 **ACTION: That a presentation be made to the November LPS meeting on the new arrangements for Watch Managers as outlined above.**
- 23/06.5 **RESOLVED: Members noted the actions and comments and approved the removal of the completed action.**
- 23/07 Performance monitoring and briefing quarter 3**
- 23/07.1 Group Manager (GM), Antony Bholah 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.

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

23/07.2 **Priority 1 - Help you to make safer and healthier choices.**

23/07.3 GM Bholah outlined the various partnership arrangements that the Service was engaged with. In reply to Members' questions, it was confirmed that Area Manager Marc House represented the Service on the Community Safety Partnership and also the Integrated Care Partnership.

23/07.4 In the quarter there had been 283 Safe and Well visits and 51 attempted interventions and eight area leaflet drops. Of the accidental fires, 54% were attributed to kitchen and cooking fires, with 21% from electrical fires.

23/07.5 Funding had been received from Electrical Safety First towards helping households with the cost-of-living crisis. In reply to a question from Cllr Knox, the Officers would ensure that contact was made with Laura Cornett from Dorset Council who was undertaking similar work with the most vulnerable members of society.

23/07.6 In the quarter, the Service had participated in testing smoke alarms and electrical safety checks as well as tyre safety week in November and the alcohol and drugs festive safety campaign in December amongst many. There had also been a campaign to #Save Safely which included advice on saving energy and keeping warm safely. There had also been considerable publicity posted on social media. In reply to a question from the Chair, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) Andy Cole stated that national considerations, for example the use of candles or using tumble dryers at night, were monitored through the National Fire Chiefs Council and issues were also monitored locally.

23/07.7 The Safe Drive Stay Alive campaign had continued with the Service attending 14 schools presenting to 2007 attendees. Virtual reality (VR) technology had been introduced in September for this training and there had also been 6 joint education events attended with partners.

23/07.8 In respect of prevention, there had been three referrals for firesetters in the quarter and one case remained open. The Arson Reduction Officer had been involved in Operation Heathland and the Keeping Dorset Safe campaigns.

23/07.9 In terms of education and youth intervention, there had been 36 school visits accessing 2671 students and also 124 students had visited five stations. There had been positive feedback from the schools involved. The delivery of education was being more focused, for example highlighting Winter water safety during icy periods, and the use of virtual packages had increased. Schools were alerted to new event postings by an e-mail distribution list.

23/07.10 The Officers added that the Service continued to provide educational visits through a risk-based approach, identifying schools with the highest risks. The Station Risk Profiles and the Community Map assisted in this respect with a RAG (red, amber, green) rating for all schools visited, which could be overlaid with

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incidents to identify trends. This was also part of the initiative for crews to target their own workloads.

23/07.11 Priority 2 - Protect you and the environment from harm

23/07.12 For protecting the public through the Regulation of Fire Safety, 354 Building Risk Reviews had taken place and this work was now completed. In addition, 174 Business Fire Safety Checks had been undertaken across the Service in quarter 3.

23/07.13 GM Bholah explained that the Service sought to engage with property owners and landlords to provide education on fire safety rather than seek enforcement. In reply to a question from the Chair on the increase in enforcement cases from 1 to 10 during the quarter, ACFO Cole stated that the emphasis was still on education and the Service would enforce when required and the numbers were not a reason for concern. The Officers also gave details of the training and practical experience undertaken by operational crews undertaking Business Fire Safety Checks and the support that was provided to them by the Fire Safety Team. The undertaking of these tasks was overseen and reviewed by Watch Managers.

23/07.14 There were three reports of potential for fire death within the quarter between the period 17 July to 27 September 2022. In reply to a question from Cllr Knox, ACFO Cole explained that the Service undertook an internal debrief within 24 hours of a fatality to ascertain if there were any points of learning to share with partner agencies before the case was considered by the Coroner. After consideration by the Coroner, a multi-agency Fatal Fire Conference took place to ascertain further points of learning.

23/07.15 Priority 3 – Be there when you need us

23/07.16 Appliance availability had been 99.1% for Wholetime Duty System during the period and 79.4% for the on-call Duty System. Discussion took place on the availability of appliances and attendance times in the Wiltshire and Dorset areas and also nationally to establish if data was consistent. It was noted that there was an inconsistency in the methods of recording of data between services which introduced challenges at a national level.

23/07.17 In reply to a question from Cllr Richard Biggs on response times and how they might be improved, ACFO Cole explained that these figures were constantly monitored, and were progress chased by the Group Managers. An increase in response times might arise from a number of factors, for example road closures and responding to multiple incidents, such as fires in the open which had seen a significant rise in the last quarters. The Chair enquired if the response times were publicised on the Authority website, and ACFO Cole stated that he would establish if this was the case.

23/07.18 GM Bholah continued that competency levels remained high and on target and details of incidents attended was also provided. Reference was also made to the work carried out in multi-agency exercises and with the Local Resilience Forum.

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23/07.19 **Demand summary**

23/07.20 Details were provided on the number of fires in the quarter – 794 (last year to date 678), the number of all false alarm incidents – 1,344 (1,152) and the number of special services attended 1,027 (997).

23/07.21 In reply to a question from Cllr Knox regarding the high number of false alarm incident figures, ACFO Cole stated the Service was reviewing the policy of attending all sleeping risk calls. This review was being undertaken by a Demand Analysis Group, which was gathering statistics and aimed to reduce the number of calls attended. The demographic for the area was also a factor in that there was considerable sheltered housing and student accommodation.

23/07.22 Discussion took place on the data sets and whether they should be over a longer period, for example five years, to better understand long term trends and to reduce short term anomalies.

23/07.23 The Chair thanked GM Bholah for his presentation.

23/07.24 **RESOLVED: Members scrutinised and noted the performance for quarter 3 2023.**

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

23/08.1 There were no matters raised by Members.

23/09 Date of Next meeting

23/09.1 The Chair confirmed the date of the next Dorset Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee meeting as 25 May 2023 at 10.00am.

The meeting closed at 11.15

Signed: _____

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