

Interim Report of the Averages Task Group

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 11th January 2016

Author:	Director of Law and Democratic Services
Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 To allow the Scrutiny Committee to consider the Interim Report of its Averages Task Group established to (i) review the Local Resilience Forum's (LRF) independent, multi-agency debrief of the Averages Fire Incident; and (ii) investigate the circumstances that led up to the incident.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Consider the findings and recommendations of the Interim Report of the Averages Task Group which deal with the review the LRF debrief of the incident.
- 2.2 Note that the Averages Task Group will prepare and submit a final report, to include consideration of the circumstances that led up to the incident, once the criminal proceedings instituted by the EA against the operator of the Marshgate site have been concluded.

3. Detail

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 13th October 2014 considered a request from Full Council to review the LRF independent, multi-agency debrief of the Averages Fire Incident. The Committee agreed to add the request to its Work Programme and appointed a Task Group to undertake the review. Councillors Maureen Penny, Bob Wright, Steve Weisinger, Toby Elliott and Mark Dempsey were appointed to the Task Group.
- 3.2 The Scrutiny Committee was aware that the debrief report would not be available until sometime in March 2015, and in anticipation of this the Scrutiny Committee updated and confirmed its Task Group membership. Councillor Colin Lovell replaced Councillor Toby Elliott on the Task Group.
- 3.3 The Task Group held its first planning meeting on 24th March 2015 and considered its Terms of Reference and the LRF debrief report. The Task Group amended its Terms of Reference to include an investigation of the circumstances that led up to the incident.

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- 3.4 A further planning meeting was held on 22nd April 2015 which considered the timescales to receive views from the public affected by the incident and the witnesses to invite to future meetings.
- 3.5 The Scrutiny Committee considered and agreed the revised Terms of Reference at its meeting held on 27th April 2015, along with a revised membership, as former Councillor Mark Dempsey was stepping down as a local Councillor to stand in the Parliamentary elections during May 2015. Councillor Des Moffatt was appointed to the Task Group vacancy at the first Scrutiny Committee after the elections.
- 3.6 The Task Group held evidence gathering sessions on 26th May 2015 for members of the public, 2nd June 2015 and 18th June 2015 for witnesses identified by the Task Group as having a direct link to the incident, as follows
- Colin Chiverton, Area Environment Manager, Environment Agency
 - Sam Weller, Civil Protection Officer, Swindon Borough Council
 - Ian Jeary, Area Manager, Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
 - John Alridge, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
 - Jim Mahony, Area Manager, Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
 - Mark Gasgarth, Area Manager, Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
 - Paul Williams, Manager of the Wiltshire and Swindon Local Resilience Forum
 - Stephen Taylor, Director of Law and Democratic Services, Swindon Borough Council
 - Victoria Tagg, Communications, Swindon Borough Council
 - Bernie Brannan, Board Director Service Delivery, Swindon Borough Council
 - Gavin Jones, Chief Executive, Swindon Borough Council
 - Paul Simmonds, Environmental Services Manager, Swindon Borough Council
 - Councillor Brian Mattock, Swindon Borough Council
 - Ayoola Oyinloye, Public Health, Swindon Borough Council

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- Christine Moloney, Thames Water
- Leon Barrett, Head of Streetsmart, Swindon Borough Council
- Adrian Burt, Strategic Support Inspector, Wiltshire Police
- Dan O'Brien, Broadcast Journalist, Political reporter, BBC Wiltshire

3.7 The Task Group met on 5th August 2015, 4th September 2015 and 9th November 2015 to consider the draft interim report. A number of amendments were made and the final version of the interim report is attached as an appendix to this report.

3.8 The Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider the interim report along with its recommendations which are detailed on page 12 of the Appendix.

4. Alternative Options

4.1 The Committee can choose to accept the interim report and action all, some or none of the recommendations of its Averages Task Group.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

5.1 This report has no financial or procurement implications at this stage. Once the final report is produced the financial or procurement implications may be highlighted.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

5.2 Legal and Human Rights considerations have been fully taken into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations of this report are compatible with convention rights.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

5.3 None

Diversity Impact Assessment

5.4 No Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) is required at this stage.

Risk Management

5.5 No risk management issues have been identified in relation to this particular report and, consequently, a risk assessment has not been completed.

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6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Board Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 The minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 13th October 2014, 23rd March 2015 and 27th April 2015.
- 7.2 The notes of the Task Group meetings held on 24th March 2015, 22nd April 2015, 26th May 2015, 2nd June 2015, 18th June 2015, 5th August 2015, 4th September 2015 and 9th November 2015.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix – Averages Task Group Interim Report