

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21 OCTOBER 2013

1. INTERIM FINDINGS OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION REVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY 2013-2016

Report of the Clerk and Monitoring Officer.

RECOMMENDED

- 2.1 That the interim findings of the Public Consultation Review of the Community Safety Strategy 2013-2016 and the interim recommendations arising from the review, as set out in the Appendix, be approved.
- 2.2 That the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair and/or Vice-Chair, amend the Public Consultation Review report to include any recommendations or comments made by the Scrutiny Committee to ensure accuracy and clarity.
- 2.3 That on completion of 2.2 above, the Monitoring Officer make the necessary arrangements and submit the interim findings of the Public Consultation Review for consideration by the Executive Committee at its meeting to be held on 4 November, 2013.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report has been prepared to outline to the Committee the findings of the scrutiny review of the Public Consultation process of the Community Safety Strategy (IRMP). The final report will be considered for approval by the Executive Committee.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The role and terms of reference for the Scrutiny Committee were approved by the Authority at its meeting on 25 June 2012. The terms of reference outline that part of the role of the Scrutiny Committee is to carry out a minimum of two scrutiny reviews per annum selected by the Committee. Such reviews will be member-led and evidence based and will produce SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely) recommendations.

- 3.2 The Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 8 April 2013 agreed to consider the public consultation of the Community Safety Strategy as part of its work programme. Public consultation for the Community Safety Strategy was carried out in November 2012 to January 2013 to meet the Authority's statutory duty to consult the community on major changes in service delivery and to provide members of the public with the opportunity to influence the way in which the Service worked now and in the future. The views of the public were sought using a structured set of questions using the key points set out within the Community Safety Strategy. However, despite the consultation being communicated widely both internally and externally across the West Midlands, the Service received a response rate of 0.11% (2291 responses).
- 3.3 In determining the appropriateness of this area for scrutiny, members applied the prioritisation tool that was introduced to them in their initial training provided by the Centre for Public Scrutiny on 7 November 2012 and determined that the scrutiny of the public consultation process was a high priority and therefore should be included in the Committee's work programme.
- 3.4 In order to be effective, every Scrutiny Review must be properly managed to make sure that the review achieves its aims and has measurable outcomes. One of the most important ways to make sure that a review goes well is to ensure that it is well defined at the outset. This way the review is less likely to get sidetracked or be overambitious in what it hopes to tackle.
- 3.5 The scoping template had been developed based on researching a number of scoping documents used by other organisations. It has been designed to help members to focus on the purpose of the review, and exactly what is to be achieved and contained suggestions on the objectives, approach methodology and outcomes for the review of public consultation that had been developed for the Scrutiny Committee by officers. This was presented as a discussion document for members to review and consider at the meeting arranged for 10 June 2013 where further input and views were sought.
- 3.6 The Committee subsequently established a working group to take forward and gather evidence for the review. This was supported by officers and various witnesses to ensure that the group received relevant information. The group met on 24 June, 15 July and 9 September 2013.

- 3.7 Having analysed stakeholder findings as part of the evidence considered by the working group, in particular the vulnerable group analysis, it was identified that there were gaps in targeting vulnerable groups. The Service is not required to undertake public consultation on the Community Safety Strategy until 2016. In order to do justice to the work of the Group, it is felt that more time is needed to enable the working group, the Community Fire Safety Team (once their restructure is implemented) and Corporate Communications to continue to analyse stakeholder findings to identify any further gaps in targeting the Service's key audience, in conjunction with local Command areas. It is envisaged that this work will be completed in the spring 2014.
- 3.8 Pending the completion of this work, an interim report of the working group has been produced which contains their interim recommendations for consideration by the Committee.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out as there are no policy changes proposed.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

None

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications. It is not anticipated that additional resources will be required to implement the recommendations.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Governance of the Authority 2013/14 Report, 24 June 2013
The Centre for Public Scrutiny Good Scrutiny Guide

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