

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 NOVEMBER 2012

1. OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT IMPROVEMENT REGISTER

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT Scrutiny Committee note the content of the Operational Assessment (OPA) Improvement Register which is attached as Appendix 1. The Register details the Service response to addressing the 'areas for consideration' identified following the Service's OPA.
- 1.2 THAT Scrutiny Committee note that the Service will utilise its existing planning and performance frameworks to implement and monitor performance in addressing the 'areas for consideration' arising from OPA.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is submitted to inform Scrutiny Committee of the content of the OPA Improvement Register and the approach to be taken in addressing the 'areas for consideration' as set out in the West Midlands Fire Service Operational Assessment Peer Challenge report, July 2012. The content of the Peer Challenge report was noted by Fire Authority Members at the Authority meeting on 24 September 2012 (Agenda Item 14). At the Authority meeting it was confirmed that an OPA Improvement Register would be produced and would be used as a means of monitoring performance in addressing the 'areas for consideration' detailed in the Peer Challenge Report.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In February 2012 Corporate Board (CB) approved that the Service would participate in OPA. In support of this the Service provided a self-assessment against the seven key assessment areas detailed in the OPA toolkit. The self-assessment was submitted in May 2012.

- 3.2 In order to enable for an external validation, independent challenge and to maximise the learning opportunities derived from producing a self-assessment, the Service agreed to undertake a Sector Peer Challenge. In addition to challenging the self-assessment, the Peer Challenge Team also considered three core questions under the theme of leadership and corporate capacity:
- How well are outcomes for local citizens being achieved?
 - How effective is leadership and governance?
 - How effective is organisational capacity to meet current requirements and future needs?
- 3.3 In support of the peer challenge process the Peer Challenge Team undertook a four day fieldwork visit from 9-12 July 2012. The Peer Challenge Team interviewed a number of stakeholders, including, the Chair, all Principal Officers, operational personnel and a wide range of partners. The Peer Challenge Team presented their initial findings to CB and the Chair prior to the conclusion of the fieldwork visit.
- 3.4 The Peer Challenge report highlighted 39 areas for consideration across the three core questions and seven key assessment areas. The final Peer Challenge report was submitted to Fire Authority on 24 September 2012.
- 3.5 One of the key aims of OPA is to provide CB and Authority Members with information to provide assurance that operational service delivery is efficient, effective and robust. To this end, it was set out in the Authority report that the Service would develop an Improvement Register, designed to inform Members of the Service's progress in addressing all the agreed areas for consideration outlined in the Peer Challenge report. At the Authority meeting it was confirmed that the OPA Improvement Register would be submitted to Scrutiny Committee (attached as Appendix 1).
- 3.6 In producing the Improvement Register all seven key assessment area leads have been involved and confirmed the progress made and, where appropriate, the target date for the implementation of the actions identified to address areas for consideration. It is intended to treat this work as normal business and, as such, it will be integrated into the

Service's existing planning and performance management frameworks. Therefore, performance updates will be provided to Members through the Scrutiny Committee and Corporate Board via the Corporate Performance Review meeting.

- 3.7 Progress in addressing the 'areas for consideration' detailed on the OPA Improvement Register will be monitored by way of a six and twelve month performance update to Corporate Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee. It is anticipated that the vast majority of the areas of consideration will be completed within 12 months and as such further performance updates will not be required beyond November 2013.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out. The matters contained in this report will not lead to a policy change.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Whilst not a legal requirement, OPA is seen as an 'Industry Standard' improvement tool.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct costs associated with undertaking OPA or a Peer Challenge.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Fire Authority Report, Agenda item 14, Operational Assessment
Peer Challenge Report, 24 September 2012.

Policy Planning Forum, OPA presentation by DCFO, 23 July 2012.

Audit and Performance Management Committee, agenda item 5
Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge, 11 June 2012.

E-mail Briefing Note on Operational Assessment and Fire Peer
Challenge which was sent to all Fire Authority Members on 19
April 2012.

Corporate Board Reports, Operational Assessment and Fire Peer
Challenge Toolkit 19 October 2012, 14 August 2012, 14 February
2012 and 22 November 2011.

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CHIEF FIRE OFFICER