

**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**4 DECEMBER 2023**

1. **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEWS 2024/25**

Report of the Clerk.

- 1.1 THAT the Scrutiny Committee consider the next themes for review to commence in 2024.
- 1.2 THAT the Scrutiny Committee consider for future review, a review of the Grievance and Disciplinary process and Blue Light Collaboration and determine which theme will be reviewed commencing with in April 2024.
- 1.3 THAT the Scrutiny Committee schedule the review within the Committee's work programme for 2024.
- 1.4 THAT the Scrutiny Committee consider the approach to engaging with Members to refresh themes for future scrutiny reviews during 2024/25.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report is submitted for the Scrutiny Committee to discuss the themes previously discussed with Members to be considered for review by the Scrutiny Committee, with a view to approve and schedule such a review within the Committee's work programme.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Committee sets out the role of the Committee, the main purpose of the Scrutiny function being to scrutinise decisions made or to be made, based on 'public safety' aligned to the following definitions:
- 3.2 **Pre scrutiny**, which enables changes proposed to strategic policy decisions to be scrutinised. These are decisions which if implemented, would change the strategic priorities and outcomes agreed by the Fire Authority

Pre scrutiny can inform policy development and/or hold the Authority to account.

- 3.3 **Post scrutiny**, which enables the Fire Authority to seek assurance around operational decisions already made by the CFO and other officers in the delivery of strategic priorities and outcomes. Post scrutiny can scrutinise performance of specific issues and/or hold officers to account.
- 3.4 As part of its role and functions, the Committee can carry out more than one review as selected by the Committee. Such reviews will be Member led and evidence based, and will produce SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely) recommendations to the Authority’.
- 3.5 On agreement of the theme for post scrutiny during 2024, a terms of reference will be drafted for agreement at the April 2024 Scrutiny Committee meeting.

#### 4. **CONSIDERATIONS FOR SCRUTINY REVIEW THEMES**

- 4.1 Themes identified for previous scrutiny have been:
- Business Continuity Arrangements
  - Prevention – Safe and Well
  - Operational training and effectiveness
  - Discipline Policy
- 4.2 All these themes except for the discipline policy have been subject to a scrutiny review since 2019, with the most recent reported as another agenda item for today’s meeting – the review of Operational Training and Effectiveness. During a recent Joint Consultative Panel meeting it was highlighted that the Grievance and Disciplinary policy could form the theme for the Committees initial review in 2024.
- 4.3 In addition recent discussions which have taken place during Collaboration and Transformation Committee meetings regarding Blue Light Collaboration, could also be considered for scrutiny review.

- 4.4 In considering which will review will be undertaken by the Committee next year, Members can note that His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) are undertaking a themed inspection of the handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services in England. The Service has been chosen as one of ten fire and rescue services to take part in this process and will be inspected during December 2023. Initial outcomes from this inspection will be communicated prior to April 2024, with a sector report to be issued in June 2024.
- 4.5 It is suggested, depending on the theme agreed for scrutiny review, the committee explore the benefit from external professional input.
- 4.6 Members of the Committee may also want to consider re engaging through an additional discussion with the Fire Authority during 2024, to consider refreshed themes for future scrutiny reviews.

## 5. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

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

## 6. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no particular legal requirements for the Authority to establish a Scrutiny Committee; it is however, considered good practice for authorities to have a vehicle through which monitoring and review of the Authority's policies and practices can be undertaken.
- 6.2 There are no direct legal implications arising out of this report.

## 7. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising as a result of the content of this report. Advice may be provided internally by Officers at no direct cost to the Authority, supporting the Committee in its work. The Scrutiny Committee can, if required, access resources to be able to engage external professional advice where applicable.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference

The contact name for this report is Karen Gowreesunker, Clerk to the Authority, telephone number 0121 380 6678.

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Clerk to the Authority