

<p><b>Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee</b></p>
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**31<sup>st</sup> March, 2014 at 10.00 am**  
**at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham**

**Present:** Councillor Chambers (Chair);  
Councillor Spence (Vice-Chair);  
Councillors Delaney, Hogarth and Tranter,

**Apologies:** Councillors Eustace, Wright and Young.

7/14

**Andy Morgan**

The Chair introduced Andy Morgan, Watch Commander at Willenhall Fire Station who he had recently shadowed. He had invited Andy to the meeting in order for him to shadow what he did for the Authority.

8/14

**Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 20th January, 2014 be approved as a correct record.

Under Minute No. 5/14 (Prevention Strategy) a discussion ensued as to how the issues of persons who were at risk, or who posed a risk to others, due to the hoarding of materials. Although the Service could advise persons, this was only possible if the individual allowed the Service access to their premises. Information was passed to appropriate partners, including Environmental Health, but there was only so much partners could do. It was suggested that the partners who might have more frequent access, i.e. the ambulance service, might be the best identifier of such persons.

**Scrutiny Committee**  
**31<sup>st</sup> March, 2014**

9/14

**An Analysis of Progress of Corporate Performance against 'The Plan' – Quarter Three 2013/2014**

Further to Minute No. 37/13, the Committee noted an analysis of organisational performance against 'The Plan' for the third quarter of 2013/2014.

The Committee noted details of performance against targets set out in 'The Plan' for the second quarter of 2013/14 in the following areas:-

- performance indicators;
- strategic objectives as outlined in 'The Plan';
- progress against programmes and projects;
- corporate risk.

It was asked if there was any method of devising an action to assist in meeting the target of employees with a disability. It was reported that quotas were not followed and that attention was focused on encouraging employees to feel able to reveal any disability or protected characteristics, e.g. some new recruits had dyslexia and were allowed extra time for the written tests.

It was noted that £3.9m would be transferred to general balances for 2013/14 only.

Members asked that they be provided with the details of the social landlords which were engaged with the West Midlands Social Housing Group in order that, if appropriate, other landlords might be encouraged to apply.

The Chair asked that the teams and individuals who had been successful in recent competitions should be shared with members. Andy Morgan informed members of a Technical Decision Exercise which he was developing, it would enable certain scenarios to be worked through by drawing up applicable issues and allow the sharing of good practice.

**Scrutiny Committee**  
**31<sup>st</sup> March, 2014**

Members noted that the total number of injuries had increased and why this had occurred. In response to the Chair's enquiry Firefighter Tommy Sedgewick was making good progress and was beginning to move around.

The number of disabled uniformed staff had fallen from 37 to 35 due to retirements; seven or eight people retire each year. The average number of working days lost due to sickness was higher than forecast but was not particularly high compared with most local authorities figures.

Members noted that the Chief Fire Officers Association was requesting an exemption from the changes to the asbestos regulations to enable fire and rescue service members to continue with three yearly medicals as opposed to every two years as directed in the regulations. They also asked for a copy of a document explaining the Integrated Personal Development System framework used to explain what was expected of staff to deliver sustainable improvements.

The Committee commented on how the points based risk system applied to home safety checks delivered to those at high risk. It was reported that in some areas housing officers had been trained to do a basic home safety check and refer the information to the Service. The Chair asked whether this information was also being collected through checks by private housing association landlords.

The Chair thanked Andy for attending and members agreed that his presence and contribution had added value and insight to the meeting.

**Resolved** that the following information be supplied to members:-

- the membership of the West Midlands Social Housing Group;
- details of those teams and individuals who had been successful in recent competitions;
- the framework applicable to the Integrated Personal Development System.

**Scrutiny Committee**  
**31<sup>st</sup> March, 2014**

10/14      **Dispute Resolution**

The Committee received a report setting out the number, type and outcomes of discipline and grievance hearings and other dispute resolution including employment tribunal activity which had occurred during the period 1st July, 2013 to 31st December, 2013. Details of any failure to agree or consult were also submitted.

The report also provided a summary of lessons learnt, taking into account issues raised by Trade Union, Representative Bodies, line managers and human resource practitioners.

It was reported that an employment tribunal training session was to be held on 15th May, 2014. The Committee suggested that this information should be shared with Authority members and that income might be generated by inviting officers from other districts to the session.

**Resolved** that the contents of the report be noted and referred to the Joint Consultative Panel.

11/14      **Work Programme 2013/14**

Members noted the work programme for 2013/2014 and that the report on Operational Peer Assessment would be submitted to the Committee at the most appropriate meeting

(Meeting ended at 11.25 am)

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