

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10 JUNE 2013

1. REVIEW OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS

Report of the Clerk and Monitoring Officer.

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT the Committee considers and approves the attached scoping document for the proposed review of the Public Consultation Process for the Community Safety Strategy.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report has been prepared to outline to the Committee the detail of the proposed scrutiny review of the Public Consultation Process in relation to the Community Safety Strategy. The attached scoping document outlines the rationale, aims and objectives and methodology of the proposed review and the support that will be provided to the working group and the 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 are requested to consider the effectiveness of measures of consultation used as part of consulting on the Community Safety Strategy and to investigate reasons for the poor response rate, to understand how future approaches to consultation could be more successful and to consider this as part of its work programme.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 The scoping template attached has 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 determine exactly what is to be achieved.
- 3.5 The scoping document contains some suggestions on the objectives, approach methodology and outcomes for the review of public consultation process that have been developed for the Scrutiny Committee by officers.
- 3.6 It is recommended that the Committee establishes a working group to take forward and gather evidence for the review. The group will need to meet more frequently than the full committee and these dates are yet to be determined. The working group will then report its findings and suggested recommendations to the Committee for consideration. It may also be necessary to call additional meetings of the Committee.
- 3.7 The scrutiny function will have the full support of officers to make sure that reviews run smoothly and that relevant information held and witnesses that are required can be accessed during the review.

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 undertake this review.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Governance of the Authority 2012/13 Report, 25 June 2012
The Centre for Public Scrutiny Good Scrutiny Guide

NEERAJ SHARMA
CLERK AND MONITORING OFFICER

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DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENT (Terms of Reference)

Review Title <i>The working name that relates to the topic</i>	Scrutiny of WMFS Public Consultation Process (Community Safety Strategy (IRMP))	Review Reference Number: <i>reference for tracking purposes.</i> WMFRA/SC/2
Commission <i>Who commissioned the work</i>	Review commissioned by the Scrutiny Committee on behalf of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority	
Task Group Members <i>Names of all those on the Task Group</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ (Chair) Councillor Keith Chambers ➤ (Vice-Chair) Councillor Sybil Spence ➤ Councillor Peter Hogarth ➤ Councillor Chris Tranter ➤ Councillor Timothy Wright <i>(Additional members to be determined by the Scrutiny Committee and DCFO)</i>	
Support <i>Scrutiny has officer support to make sure that reviews run smoothly</i>	<p>Scrutiny will require officer support to make sure that the review runs smoothly and this will be facilitated by the Strategic Planning Improvement and Risk Team (SPIRiT) within the Service, working with the Democratic Services team at Sandwell MBC.</p> <p>Support will be provided to assist the Chair with the arrangements for managing the review and with keeping to timetable. SPIRiT will facilitate requests for information or the attendance of officers at meetings.</p> <p>Democratic Services will support the working group and the Committee in evidence gathering and report writing, including the formulation of appropriate recommendations and the production of the final report to be presented to the Executive Committee.</p>	
Rationale <i>Explain why the review is important to the Scrutiny Committee. A clear rationale will also help clarify the indicators of success</i>	<p>The public consultation which took place during November/December 2012, was an opportunity for the public to influence the way in which we work now and in the future. This consultation exercise asked the public for their views, using a structured set of questions, concerning the key points set out in the then, draft Community Safety Strategy. This strategy informs the priorities set out in 'The Plan' 2013-2016.</p> <p>Despite promoting this widely internally and externally across the fire service area only 0.11% (2291 responses (1937 paper, 354 electronic)) of the community responded, which is a low response rate, though an increase following the previous consultation in 2010 (0.07%) and not untypical of past response rates or within our sector..</p> <p>Members want to review the effectiveness of the methods of consultation used and investigate the possible reasons for the poor response rate, to understand how future approaches to consultation could be more successful in improving the level of feedback and involvement, to help shape our priorities.</p> <p>The Scrutiny Committee sees this as an opportunity to further raise their awareness of the approach used and how this could be actively promoted through their roles in the community, to encourage and support greater participation in any future events.</p>	

<p>Review Aims Objectives</p> <p><i>The main priorities and what the Review hopes to achieve</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To understand the approach and timeline taken to consultation during November-December 2012 ➤ To identify how and why this approach was selected ➤ To identify the methods used to target the community and any trends in the groups who responded ➤ To identify the most successful methods used for consultation across the Service and establish why ➤ To identify which command areas were able to generate the most informative responses and why/how (same as above?) ➤ To identify how the approaches used targeted vulnerable groups ➤ To identify any barriers existing which prevented the public from responding ➤ To make recommendations to support removal of barriers for future consultations to increase response rates ➤ To make recommendations on how the methods used could be improved to encourage increased response rates ➤ To make recommendations on how elected members can help to communicate and promote consultation exercises within their local communities, with the aim of increasing response rates ➤ To consider the effectiveness of approach taken ➤
<p>Link with Authority Priorities & Objectives</p> <p><i>How the review is linked to corporate aims and priorities</i></p>	<p>This review is linked to the vision of “Making West Midlands Safer” and supports the key priorities and outcomes outlined in The Plan. The very nature of public consultation should provide the Service with an understanding of what the community consider to be important in the delivery of our services. This is critical to the delivery of our vision, priorities and outcomes in The Plan.</p> <p>We have a role to ensure we are informing the public about what we are doing and any changes in this, as well as providing an opportunity for the public to influence.</p> <p>The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2013 requires fire and rescue authorities to engage with their communities to provide them with the opportunity to influence their local service.</p>
<p>Success Criteria/ Outcomes</p> <p><i>Some key indicators which will be used to tell you if the review is achieving its purpose.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Greater understanding of where methods to consultation have worked well – good practice to share. ➤ Identification of opportunities for improvement in the approach taken to consultation. ➤ Raised awareness of members, of the consultation approach and better understanding of how members can promote this more in future exercises ➤ Better informed and increased response rates in future consultation exercises based on the realisation of the above criteria and outcome. ➤ Barriers are less prevalent, do not exist or are quickly identified and overcome. ➤ Ultimately the consultation process enables (as appropriate) a more informed public to contribute more effectively to plans for the future.
<p>Methodology/ Approaches</p> <p><i>e.g. Desk based review of papers visits/observations Comparisons with other authorities Process mapping/ Workshops/focus groups Seminars/public</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <u>Interviews</u> with officers to provide an understanding and background information regarding the overall approach taken to consultation – consultation strategy, timeline, consultation material used, report detailing outcomes of consultation questions and review of approach ➤ <u>Local Research</u> – members to gain an understanding of how consultation was undertaken in their areas and importantly how well communicated to local communities, understood and responded to. To identify where responses were lacking and potential reasons for this. How could local communities be encouraged to respond in the future?

<p><i>meetings</i> <i>Commissioned research</i> <i>Interviewing officers</i> <i>Calling witnesses/experts to give evidence</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Members will also <u>review</u> the papers submitted to authority via, PPF, Executive Committee and Authority meetings. ➤ <u>Research</u> other authority approaches to consultation ➤ Understanding of legal requirements ➤ Members will then develop further their key lines of enquiry and task off further work as identified in the previous stages.
<p>Witnesses <i>Officers who are required to attend to explain decisions and actions taken and their performance. Other people who may be invited to discuss issue of local concern and /or answer question</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Chair of the Authority & Deputy Chief Fire Officer ➤ Head of Communications ➤ Head of SPIRiT/Intelligence Manager ➤ Operations Commanders/Station Commanders/LALO's ➤ Partners ➤ Local Communities ➤
<p>Documentary Evidence <i>e.g. Government legislation</i> <i>Best Value</i> <i>Performance Plan</i> <i>Relevant service plans for service groups</i> <i>Relevant Performance Indicators</i> <i>Budgetary data and activity</i> <i>Minutes of meetings</i> <i>Independent research and papers</i></p>	<p>Background papers will be made available for Members on all information regarding the Community Safety Strategy (IRMP) consultation. This will also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Organisation charts ➤ Community Safety Strategy ➤ The Plan ➤ 2013-2014 IRMP Consultation documents, questionnaire and reports ➤ Reports evaluating consultation responses ➤ Marketing and publicity materials
<p>Publicity Requirements <i>how the results of the Review once it has been completed will be made public</i></p>	<p>The report once agreed by the Executive Committee, will be published on the Service's internet and intranet sites.</p>
<p>Resources Requirements (Financial)</p>	<p>No additional funding has been identified as being required for this work.</p>
<p>Timescales <i>Timescales for when various parts of project should be completed – what will be done, by when how and when</i></p>	<p>Ideally the timing of this review should support the potential need for public consultation in 2013 which would inform any changes to our Community Safety Strategy for 2014-2015.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Scrutiny Committee meeting <u>10th June 2013</u> to agree scope of the review. ➤ The working group/Scrutiny Committee to establish a programme of meetings to include any additional meetings required to support progress of the review. Suggested extra meeting(s) takes place in <u>June and between July/August</u>. ➤ Review to commence in <u>June 2013</u> following agreement of scope. ➤ Review progress in Scrutiny Committee on <u>22nd July</u>. ➤ Draft report and recommendations to be submitted in Scrutiny Committee on <u>16th September 2013</u>.

	➤ Submit report and recommendations to the Executive Committee on <u>14th October 2013.</u>	
Evaluation <i>A review is assessed on its effectiveness by finding out what changes have been made as a result</i>	A review date of will be agreed by members to evaluate the outcome of the recommendations. It is proposed this review is completed 12 months after any findings are implemented.	
Scoping document Completed by: <i>(Name and Signature)</i>		Date:
Project Approved by: <i>(Name and Signature)</i>		Date: