

Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee

8 April, 2013, at 1.00 pm
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham

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

Apology: Councillor Young.

6/13 Minutes

With reference to Minute No 2/13 [Positive Action Strategy for Recruitment, Progression and Recruitment] and in the light of an earlier discussion at the Policy Planning Forum about firefighter recruitment, the Chair asked for the report on this matter to be circulated to all members of the Authority for information, and to be included on the agenda for a future Executive Committee or Authority meeting.

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 4 February, 2013, be confirmed as a correct record.

7/13 Analysis of Progress of Corporate Performance against 'The Plan' – Quarter 3 2012/13

The Committee noted a report analysing the organisation's performance against the Plan in the third quarter of 2012/13 against key performance indicators; in delivering the ten strategic objectives; in delivery of programmes and projects; and in corporate risk.

The Chair asked for the Committee's compliments on the organisation's continuing good performance to be passed on to staff.

Reference was made to a recent increase in the number of fire deaths. The Service was investigating this matter and a report would be brought to the next meeting.

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8/13 Operational Assessment – Improvement Register Progress Update

The Committee noted progress made by the organisation to the end of February 2012 in addressing areas for consideration detailed in the Operational Assessment Improvement Register. Of the 38 items noted by the Committee in the last report in November 2012, only 12 were still outstanding but were on target for completion.

The Chair asked for completed actions to be omitted from the next report to simplify the document.

Reference was made to the action relating to improving the take-up of member development. This matter had also been flagged up in a recent internal audit report on governance of the Authority. The Chair suggested that the Committee could consider including this matter in its work programme.

9/13 Scrutiny Review - Methods of Public Consultation

The Committee was reminded that its terms of reference provided for a minimum of two scrutiny reviews per annum selected by the Committee. The Policy Planning Forum had recently received a presentation on the outcome of the public consultation process in relation to the Authority's Community Safety Strategy. It was reported that despite a pro-active consultation, with numerous events taking place in each command area, only 0.11% of the community responded to the consultation. It was suggested that the Committee might wish to look in more detail at the methods of consultation used and their effectiveness, and investigate possible reasons for the poor response rate.

The Committee felt that a review could be used as a de-brief on the process, but this work would need to fit around the statutory deadlines for consultation on the annual review of the Strategy, which would need to start in September 2013.

Resolved:

- (1) that the methods of consultation used by the Service be the subject of a scrutiny review;

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- (2) that a working group comprising the Chair and Councillors Hogarth, Spence, Tranter and Wright be established to take forward the review; and
- (3) that the Clerk be asked to prepare a scoping document for the review for approval at a meeting of the working group to be convened as soon as possible.

10/13 Feedback from the Safeside Review Working Group

The Chair reported that the Working Group had visited Safeside Handsworth as part of its investigations. The Group had been impressed by the contribution of the volunteers at both Safeside premises.

The draft review report was currently being drafted and would be circulated for comments by members of the working group with a view to being submitted to the Executive Committee on 10 June, 2013.

11/13 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved that the public and press be excluded from the rest of the meeting to avoid the possible disclosure of exempt information under Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 relating to information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

12/13 Disciplinary and Grievance Monitoring Report

The Committee received a report setting out the number, type and outcomes of disciplinary and grievance hearings and employment tribunal activity from July to December 2012. The report also provided a summary of lessons learned taking into account issues raised by representative bodies, line managers and HR practitioners.

(Meeting ended at 1.50 pm)

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