

Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee
11 September 2023

Conducted as a public meeting at Headquarters and digitally via
Microsoft Teams

Present: Councillor Lloyd (Chair), Councillor Miks, Councillor Atwal, Councillor Kettle
Virtual: Councillor Dehar, Councillor Waters,
Officers: Richard Stanton, Sam Burton, Karan Gowreesunker, Tom Embury.

Please note, Councillor Kettle attended on behalf of Councillor Barrie.
Councillor Atwal arrived at 10.43am (Agenda Item 4)

01/23 **Apologies**
Apologies were received from Councillor Barrie.

02/23 **Declarations of Interest**
There were no declarations of interest received.

03/23 **Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 17 July 2023**
Resolved:

1. That the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 17 July 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

At the request of Sam Burton an update was provided on Agenda Item 5 first: Scrutiny Committee engagement sessions part of Scrutiny Review of Training and Career Development. Followed by Agenda Item 4; Scrutiny Committee Engagement Sessions as part of the Scrutiny.

04/23 **Scrutiny Committee engagement sessions as part of Scrutiny Review of Training and Career Development [Verbal Report]**

Sam Burton, Head of Inclusion and Development advised the Competency Risk Assessment (CRA) has been progressing well and there has been good engagement from key stakeholders. The Trainee Firefighter Development Programme (TFDP) was refreshed in August and is also

progressing well with positive feedback received. Following the data received from OI, some cultural changes were identified and will be working on how this is improved for future training.

Regarding Distributed Training Model (method of operational training across brigade buildings, DTM), there is a diverse team of middle managers delivering that review. This has been brought to and discussed at SET meetings (Strategic Enabling Team). This is to conclude early January where recommendations will be presented.

There has been an in-depth review of how we deliver our leadership Programmes across the service. Our Organisational Learning and Personal Development (OLPD) team has worked with stakeholders to develop competencies for that Pathway. A report of this is due to be submitted in November.

05/23

Scrutiny Committee engagement sessions as part of Scrutiny [Verbal Report]

Sam Burton thanked Councillors for their support in attending the member led session which was taking place later that afternoon (11 September 13.00- 15.30hrs). A further session with a watch is taking place at Canley fire station on 25 September.

Alongside these sessions, a stakeholder group with trainee firefighters is also being developed. This should take place after 25 September.

Sam Burton advised that Tom Embury, Deputy Clerk to the Authority has created questions for each session which will enable members to focus on specific areas. The main points from that meeting will be captured and feedback will go to Scrutiny as a report in November.

Tom Embury advised this will be discussed further at the end of this meeting.

Councillor Miks requested that in the final report, what might be useful is Statistics that show total amount of applicants,

repeat applicants and how many firefighters leave the service early.

Resolved.

1. To include useful statistics within the report which will be presented in November.

ACFO Richard Stanton wanted to highlight to the committee members that this is Sam Burton's last scrutiny meeting and thanked her for her support and hard work.

06/23

HMICFRS Spotlight report [Verbal Report]

Richard Stanton, Assistant Chief Fire Officer provided an update on the HMICFRS spotlight report recommendations. A presentation was shared with members of the meeting.

Richard Stanton advised that there are a total of 35 recommendations, and these have been RAG rated (Red, Amber and Green) to indicate progress. WMFS have already achieved 8 recommendations (Green) and are working towards a further 10 of these recommendations (Amber). There are 2 in which WMFS are not yet working towards but are awaiting input on other organisations (Red). The other 15 do not apply to WMFS but to other organisations (Grey).

As an organisation we are waiting for the Fire Standard to be published which will inform next steps on the 2 red rated items.

Richard Stanton provided further details regarding the items highlighted in Red and Amber.

Progress has been made regarding recommendation 9 which is currently listed as Amber. The consultation has concluded regarding DBS checks. By the end of November all checks should be in place and therefore, the service is ahead of the required deadline of December 2023.

Regarding recommendation 12, this is currently deferred as is dependent on Recommendation 11 from HMICFRS. WMFS cannot take any action until the above is complete.

Similarly, recommendation 14 has also been deferred as action is dependent on Recommendation 13.

Recommendation 21 regarding 360-degree feedback; the process is in place for all senior leaders and managers. This is currently at 70% completion. The latest update provided advised that any system changes required, and anticipated guidance and communication will be in place by 1 October. Staff have methods of feedback through their IPDR and regular 1:2:1.

Recommendation 22 then looks at rolling Recommendation 21 to the wider service. When the system of choice is confirmed, we will be able to move from 70% completion to 100% completion.

Recommendation 23 is still in progress. Leading and Developing People gap analysis was completed 1 June. Outstanding Items are the leading and developing people Fire Standards and Employee Sentiment System which can be moved to 100 once we confirm what other systems are available to understand staff sentiment on a more periodic and frequent basis.

Regarding Recommendation 32, Crew Commander Development Programme has now been developed. Phase 1 in September will review feedback. Phase 2 will provide development opportunities, awareness sessions and support against the areas that were identified in September. This will enable Phase 3 to be completed in October 2023.

Recommendation 33; regarding plans developed to promote progressions pathways for existing staff in non-operational roles and put plans in place to reduce any inequalities of opportunity. Karen Gowreesunker will be leading the role as head of people development and inclusion. Information received from the data will establish a pathway that supports progression for all.

The Committee were informed that the HMICFRS have set out a plan to embark on a thematic inspection focused on discipline, grievance, and complaint handling. There are 10 Fire Rescue Services who have selected for this which

includes WMFS. They'll be inspecting the service between 2-16 December 2023 and documents are being prepared for that review. There won't be an individual report per service but an overall sector report. They will receive hot debrief feedback about what they found within WMFS and any of the recommendations.

Following concerns, members were re-assured that this a thematic inspection that will lead to an overall report which will allow individual services a 30- 60-minute hot debrief with the CFO highlighting what they found with each service. There is a risk, however, that anything reported that may raise concern within other FRS may also be associated with WMFS.

Details of thematic inspection will be discussed in the Members Engagement Forum which is to take place on the 18 September.

Following queries regarding the feedback provided in the report, Richard provided assurance that the report will be published by the HMICFRS based on their findings.

Cllr Lloyd advised members that at the end of AGM, Scrutiny will have a chance to provide their end of year report and ensure that all members, including those who are not within Scrutiny, are aware of the reports and overall outcomes.

07/23

Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023-24

Tom Embury, presented the Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2023-2024

The training development and final report will be presented to the Scrutiny meeting in December. The Fire Control performance report has been deferred on the basis that we did not have sufficient additional information since the last report in July.

No changes requested.

08/23

Any other Business

Tom Embury provided details regarding the session scheduled this afternoon.

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The meeting finished at 11.05 hours.