

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

27 MARCH 2017

1. REVIEW OF DATA SHARING - PROPOSALS

Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT the findings and subsequent proposals for change arising from the Scrutiny Committee's Review of Data Sharing be approved.
- 1.2 THAT subject to the approval required in 1.1, the report be submitted to Executive Committee for consideration.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the content of the Review of Data Sharing report and approve its findings and proposals, following which Scrutiny Committee are asked to approve the forwarding of the report to Executive Committee for consideration.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Members will recall that in February 2016 the Scrutiny Committee commissioned a review of all aspects of the Service's data sharing arrangements. This was a recommendation from the review of partnership arrangements. The scope of the review was agreed and is attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.2 In delivering the requirements of this review, it was agreed by Scrutiny Committee that a Member led working group be established comprising Councillors Tranter, Spence and Hogarth.

- 3.3 As is common with all reviews, a number of opportunities for improvement have been identified and feature within the proposals made. The proposals made will provide the opportunity to provide a clear picture of the level and effectiveness of data sharing between West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) and partner agencies. In addition, to identify if there are lessons to be learned from other agencies and sectors. This will put the organisation in a better position to maintain and improve its performance around data sharing, the evaluation of data sharing and to adopt a 'best practice' approach. This will lead to the Service being able to identify and engage with the most vulnerable people within the community.
- 3.4 The scope of the review looked at how the Service shares data with other organisations and how other organisations share data with WMFS. It was recognised that the Service works with a range of partners to share data and support the delivery of 'The Plan' in making the West Midlands, Safer, Stronger and Healthier.
- 3.5 A key finding from the review was that WMFS does not have an established policy or operating principles for data sharing.
- 3.6 Historically relationships with partners to assist with data sharing have been established locally within Commands. The Community Safety team has recently been centralised and are working in a relatively new structure.
- 3.7 Due to a lack of policy or operating principles for data sharing, there is currently no central control of data sharing and subsequently no complete picture of the data being shared between WMFS and other agencies.
- 3.8 The Community Safety team and the Data Management department are key stakeholders in Data Sharing as are staff in Commands and partners. There should be stakeholder engagement in establishing the policy and operating principles for data sharing. This will assist in sharing data in the future, supporting an approach which is aligned to the needs of WMFS, its partners and the needs of local communities.
- 3.9 In conjunction with the development of a policy, there is a requirement for a full audit to be undertaken to determine what

data is currently being shared across the organisation with partners and vice versa.

3.10 The full range of proposals are contained within the Review of the Data Sharing report (Appendix 2) and are set out separately in the Action Plan (Appendix 3). The proposals will enable for:-

- The establishment of effective governance and evaluation arrangements to enable for assurance to be provided that data sharing is being carried out in line with WMFS policy expectations.
- A complete picture of the amount, type and purpose of the data that is being shared between WMFS and other agencies and in addition other agencies and ourselves. Assurance is required to clarify if the data is being managed as required by the Data Protection Act and the Management of Information policy.
- A requirement to simplify data sharing agreements, taking into account best practice as documented by the 'Centre of Excellence for Information Sharing'.
- As part of the data sharing audit a further assessment of the current ICT systems and arrangements to enable the appropriate sharing of data in-house and with partner organisations.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out. The matters contained in this report do not relate to a policy change

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The course of action recommended in this report does not raise issues which should be drawn to the attention of the Authority's Monitoring Officer.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Scrutiny Committee, Scope for review of Data Sharing 16.02.16.

Scrutiny Committee, Data Sharing Update 05.09.16.

Scrutiny Committee, Data Sharing Update 14.11.16.

Supporting Review papers – Held in the Strategic Hub

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SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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