

**Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee
2015/16**

1. Background

The Scrutiny Committee was established by the Fire Authority at its Annual General Meeting in 2012. Its purpose is to:

- inform policy development
- hold officers and the Service to account
- conduct reviews into specific issues

The key benefits of the Committee can be seen as:

- Complementing the strategic and policy formulation and development work of the Authority and Service.
- Developing the skills of members to enable them to investigate below the surface of policies, strategies and processes.
- Providing a useful oversight and an element of 'challenge' to performance improvement processes and continuous improvement.
- Encouraging public involvement in the policy process.
- Supporting the development of an environment that stimulates a more reflective, evaluative and evidence based culture within the Authority and Service.

The Terms of Reference for the Committee can be found at Appendix A of this report.

2. Meetings

During 2015/16, the Committee met on the following dates:

• 17 August 2015
• 12 October 2015
• 16 November 2015
• 15 February 2016
• 21 March 2016
• 06 June 2016

3. Members & Attendance Record

	27/08/15	12/10/15	16/11/15	15/02/16	21/03/16	06/06/16
Councillor Barrie	√	X	√	√	√	√
Councillor Hogarth	√	X	X	√	√	√
Councillor B Singh	√	√	√	√	√	√
Councillor Skinner	√	√	√	√	√	√
Councillor Spence	√	√	√	X	X	√
Councillor Tranter	√	√	√	√	√	√
Councillor Ward	√	X	√	X	X	N/A
Councillor Young	X	√	√	√	X	√

Note: Councillor P Singh attended as substitute for Councillor Hogarth at the meetings held on 12 October and 16 November.

Senior Officers from the Authority are also present as appropriate.

Working Groups are also appointed to consider scrutiny reviews. The Committee must undertake a minimum of two such reviews each year. Each Working Group has four or five members allocated to it.

4. Business

During the year the Committee conducted the following business:

- Quarterly Analysis of Corporate Performance against 'The Plan'
- Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality quarterly updates
- Dispute Resolution Monitoring
- Review of Human Resources Policies (People Support Services) that relate to positive action strategies
- Work programme selection
- Working Group Review of Partnerships (review completed with proposals submitted and agreed, progress of outcomes monitored)
- Working Group Review of Data Sharing (initial scoping document submitted and working group established)

Note: A working group was established to undertake a review of data sharing with partners. This review is expected to be complete in 2016/17.

5. The Committee's main achievements

The Committee believes its key achievements during the year included:-

- The Service's partnership working arrangements had been identified by senior Officers as a potential area for concern and improvement. The Committee agreed to examine this area and undertook a review of partnership working. The review led to a number of recommendations to be implemented, the outcomes of which will continue to be monitored by the Committee as progress is made.
- One area identified for improvement by the review of partnership working was data sharing. Therefore, as a direct result of this review, a review of data sharing will be undertaken including the examination of the associated protocols and procedures, analysing their effectiveness, and identifying and removing barriers where present. The review has been scoped and a Member led working party has been agreed. It is intended that the review will be completed, and its findings submitted, during year 2016/17.
- The robust monitoring of the Service's performance in the areas of Equality and Diversity, analysis of Corporate Performance against 'The Plan', workforce profile indicators and the Prevention Strategy, including Safe and Well visits.

Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Committee

To carry out a maximum 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 to the Executive Committee.

To track and monitor the implementation of review recommendations that are accepted by the Executive Committee.

To summon any officer or member of the Authority to give account in respect of reviews or any other relevant matter.

To manage, in consultation with the Strategic Enabler for Finance and Resources, a specific budget for the purpose of buying in any necessary external advice and support in connection with the reviews.

To receive and scrutinise performance information including progress against the Community Safety Strategy and 'The Plan', the Service's objectives and corporate performance indicators and review performance targets.

To have responsibility for scrutiny of Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality and diversity throughout the West Midlands Fire Service and to review policies and monitor performance in relation thereto.

To monitor and scrutinise as appropriate the Authority's HR policies.

To monitor and scrutinise sickness levels, promotion policies and employee exit information.

To receive information and statistics on grievance monitoring and to report outcomes to the Joint Consultative Panel.

To ensure that the Authority is meeting its duties under Health & Safety and environmental and other relevant legislation.

To deal with any matters referred to it by the full Authority, the Policy Planning Forum or Executive Committee, the Chief Fire Officer, Clerk, Monitoring Officer or Treasurer, not within its work programme.

To refer any matter for consideration by the Authority, another Committee or an officer where considered appropriate.

To submit its minutes and an Annual Report to the Authority.

In order to allow for separation of the scrutiny and decision making functions, members of the Scrutiny Committee shall not sit on the Executive Committee.

The Committee will sit in public with minimum exceptions.

In addition to its programmed meetings, the Committee will hold additional meetings, as and when required, in order to efficiently manage its workload.