WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

25 JUNE 2018

1. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2017/18

Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

RECOMMENDED

That the Authority receives the Scrutiny Committee's Annual Report 2017/18.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is submitted to bring to the attention of the Authority the Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee 2017/18.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Scrutiny Committee was established at the Annual General Meeting of the Authority in June 2012. The Committee was to undertake performance management functions and would also scrutinise human resource matters, equality and diversity and health and safety across the Service. Its purpose is to:

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

3.2 The Annual Report for 2017/18 is attached as an Appendix for consideration by the Authority. The report was approved by the Scrutiny Committee on the 4 June 2018.

4. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no particular legal requirements for the Authority to establish a Scrutiny Committee; it is however, considered good practice for authorities to have a vehicle through which monitoring and review of the Authority's policies and practices can be undertaken.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Advice may be provided internally by Officers at no direct cost to the Authority, supporting the Committee in its work. The Scrutiny Committee can, if required, access resources to be able to engage external professional advice where applicable.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Authority and Scrutiny Committee Reports
Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Chris Tranter
Chair of the Scrutiny Committee

Appendix 1

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE

Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee 2017/18

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
- hold the Authority 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 2017/18, the Committee met on the following dates:

• 04 September 2017
• 09 October 2017
• 13 November 2017
• 26 February 2018
• 26 March 2018
• 04 June 2018

3. Members & Attendance Record

	04/09/17	09/10/17	13/11/17	26/02/18	26/03/18	04/06/18
Councillor Barrie	√	√	√	√	√	X
Councillor Brackenridge	√	√	√	√	√	X
Councillor Hogarth	√	√	X	√	√	√
Councillor Male	√	X	√	√	√	√
Councillor Miks	√	√	√	√	√	√
Councillor Spence	√	√	√	√	√	√
Councillor Tranter	√	X	√	√	√	√
Councillor Young	√	X	√	√	X	X

Senior Officers from the Authority are also present as appropriate.

Working Groups are also appointed to consider scrutiny reviews. The Committee are to undertake a maximum of two such reviews each year. Each Working Group has a minimum of three 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
- Operational Assessment Improvement Register
- Work programme selection
- Working Group Review of Positive Action and Firefighter Recruitment
- Progress updates on the outcomes of the Review of Data Sharing and the Safeside Update regarding Transport Funding

5. The Committee's main achievements

The Committee believes its key achievements during the year included:

- The Committee undertook to review and evaluate the Service's approach to positive action and firefighter recruitment in 2016/17 (original proposal and scoping document submitted to the Committee at the February 2017 meeting). The Scrutiny Review of Positive Action and Firefighter Recruitment includes the examination of the associated protocols and procedures, analysing their effectiveness, and identifying and removing barriers where present. The review remains in progress with regular updates being submitted to the Committee. It is anticipated that, subject to the approval of the Committee, the review will be completed during municipal year 2018/2019 with recommendations put forward to the Fire Authority for consideration.

- Updates were provided on the outcomes of the Data Sharing Review and the outcomes of the review of the transport funding issues at Safeside, allowing the Committee to monitor progress.

- Following the publication of the Service's Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge in June 2017, the Committee has monitored the progress of the work undertaken by the Service in addressing the areas for consideration raised by the Fire Peer Challenge Team via the monitoring of the Operational Assessment Improvement Register.

- The robust monitoring of the Service's performance in the areas of Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality, analysis of Corporate Performance against 'The Plan', workforce profile indicators and dispute resolutions.

Appendix A

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.