

Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee

14 February 2022

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

Present: Councillor Spence (Chair), Councillor Locke (Vice-Chair), Councillor Barlow, Councillor Barrie and Councillor Dehar

Virtual: Councillor Young

Officers: Andrea Simmonds, Karen Gowreesunker, Kate Alliss, Kirsty Tuffin, Pete Wilson, Simon Barry, Stephen Timmington.

01/22 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Shirley Haines.

02/22 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

03/22 **Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 01 November 2021**

Resolved:

1. That the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 01 November 2021 were agreed as a correct record of proceedings.

04/22 **Fire Control Performance Report – Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 2019-20, and Quarters 1 to 4 2020-21**

Karen Gowreesunker, Clerk to the Authority, presented the Fire Control Performance Report – Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 2019-20, and Quarters 1 to 4 2020-21 report, that outlined the operational performance of Fire Control.

The Committee were advised that the report covered the following two periods: 01/10/19 to 31/03/20 (Qtr. 3 and 4 – 2019-20) and 01/04/20 to 31/03/21 (Qtr. 1 to 4 2020-21). The report covering an 18-month period would bring the reporting schedule up to date following the Committee reconvening meetings in November 2021.

The Committee were advised that of the 65,997 emergency calls received for West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS), Fire Control mobilised 56% of the incidents. The mobilisation ratio of calls had been dependent upon the following:

- Calls challenging automated fire alarms (AFAs)
- Calls challenging special service calls that were deemed non-emergency
- Repeat 999 calls
- Use of 999eye footage/imagery

The average length of time for the critical incident types, for 999 calls to mobilise appliances had been within the WMFS aim of under 80 seconds.

The Committee were advised that Fire Control had successfully recruited 8 individuals to join two Fire Control training courses. 215 applicants were received, 28 of which were shortlisted with a ratio of 29% male/79% female and 18% were BAME. Of the successful 8 applicants, 1 had been male and 1 had identified as BAME.

Work had been conducted with the Command-and-Control Supplier, Capita, to upgrade the Vision Command and Control system used for integrated calls, incident and resource management across WMFS, and to upgrade the current 'Vision 3' to 'Vision 4'. It had been anticipated that the new system would go live on Monday 28th February.

Members praised WMFS staff for all their had work and dedication throughout the pandemic.

Resolved:

1. That it be agreed that the Fire Control performance update for the following two periods, be noted:
 - 01/10/19 to 31/03/20 (quarters 3 and 4, 2019/20)
 - 01/04/20 to 31/03/21 (quarters 1 to 4, 2020/21)

05/22

Scrutiny Review of Safe and Well 2022

Andrea Simmonds, Head of Community Safety, presented the Scrutiny Review of Safe and Well 2022 report that outlined the proposal for Scrutiny Committee to review safe

and wells (SAW) following their concerns raised pre-pandemic, on the impact on relations with partners/referrals for SAW as a result of the Falls Response contracts and the Back Home Safe and Well pilot in 2018.

The Committee were advised that there had been new developments in SAW that would be beneficial to consider in the scope of the review. Those highlighted were:

- Introduction of the Fire Standard for Prevention
- Introduction of the NFCC Person Centred Framework for Home Fire Safety Visits
- The Covid-19 Pandemic
- Introduction of new systems and processes to support the delivery of SAW
- Restructure of the Prevention Team in Headquarters.

The proposed purpose of the review would be to establish that SAW had been effective, reduced the numbers of emergency incidents that WMFS attended, improved the safety and health of those most vulnerable to fire with communities, had targeted based on local, regional and national data and was aligned to national frameworks. WMFS could evidence through a review that SAW reduced the risk and vulnerability from accidental fires or serious/fatal casualty through its:-

- Stratification of risk including peoples understanding of the links between health inequalities and risk and vulnerability to fire
- Record keeping,
- Training and development,
- Performance management,
- Quality assurance and Evaluation
- Established relationships with and the referrals received from partners who work with those identified as being at risk and vulnerable to fire.

A review on remote SAW delivery that occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic would help highlight the value and

benefit it had made as a SAW intervention and establish SAW as a business-as-usual Prevention activity. The draft outcomes and areas of work in progress, as per appendix 1, were also highlighted to the Committee.

It was agreed that the final scoping document be brought to Scrutiny Committee in May 2022. It was agreed that Councillor Spence (Chair), Councillor Barlow and Councillor Dehar would be members of the working group with stakeholders to conduct the review over a 6-month period.

Following questions, Pete Wilson, Strategic Lead (Project Executive) Prevention, advised that during the pandemic, referral numbers had not dropped as much as anticipated and that individuals could refer themselves should they wish to. Members could refer individuals in their wards but had to obtain the individuals permission to do so.

Resolved:

1. That it be agreed that the recommendation to proceed with the review of Safe and Well (SAW), as outlined in the report and appendix 1, be approved.
2. That it be agreed that a working group be established with the following members:
 - Cllr Barlow
 - Cllr Spence
 - Cllr Dehar

06/22

Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2021-2022

Simon Barry, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the Scrutiny Committee Work Plan for 2021-2022. No changes were requested.

The Chair of the Committee commended Officers for the work they had provided within the work programme.

Resolved:

1. That it be agreed that the Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2021-2022 be approved.

The meeting finished at 13:39 hours.

Kirsty Tuffin
Strategic Hub
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