

Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee

10 October 2016 at 12.30pm

at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham

Present: Councillor Tranter (Chair);
Councillors Barrie, Brackenridge, Dad, Hogarth, Skinner,
Spence and Young

Apology:

Nil

Observer:

Councillor P Singh

23/16 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

24/16 **Minutes**

Councillor Young noted that 24% of management roles were held by female and BME staff and enquired how many members of staff the 24% equated to.

Wendy Browning-Sampson, People Support Services Manager, advised that the figures would be collated and fed back.

ACFO Taylor advised that the scheduled agenda item 'Update on the Progress of the Data Sharing Review' would not be presented at the meeting due to no further notable progress having been made since the previous update (on 5 September), which was partly due to the meetings being scheduled so close to each other.

Councillor Tranter agreed that the update would be submitted to the committee at the next scheduled meeting (14 November).

Resolved:-

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2016, be approved as a correct record.

25/16 Update on the Scrutiny Review of Partnerships

ACFO Taylor provided an overview of the Update on the Scrutiny Review of Partnerships:

The review, which was carried out during 2015, was a systematic review of partnerships, systems and processes. The outcomes of the review were 90% complete, including the restructure of the partnerships team and the review of processes and procedures. Additionally, governance arrangements had been revised and the partnerships policy reviewed. Centralised support had been provided to ensure more assurance, guidance and leadership, including the assignment of a Partnerships Business Partner to each of the Command teams. Every member of the partnerships team had also been briefed on commissioning to support them in the identification of such opportunities.

The changes that had been made following the review had resulted in an improvement in performance and had been met with positive feedback from stations and partners.

Wendy Browning-Sampson advised that the consultation process undertaken as part of the partnerships review had received positive feedback from the Trade Unions and the same process would be applied to other change management processes.

26/16 Update on the Scrutiny Review of Safeside

ACFO Taylor provided an overview of the Update on the Scrutiny Review of Safeside:

The review, which was carried out in 2013, had taken a holistic approach to the Safeside facilities at Eastside and Handsworth. Safeside had been found to be engaging well with partners, both public and private.

Since the review had been completed, a new Safeside manager had taken overall responsibility for both sites and had recently reviewed the

management structures, the recommendations from which had been included within the wider review of the Community Safety Team as recommended by the Scrutiny Committee's Partnerships Review.

It had been noted that the environment that Safeside operated in had changed significantly since the review was conducted. In education, the rise of academies continued to make it difficult to engage schools collectively. Pressure on curriculum and school budgets made it increasingly hard for schools to support trips, with costs increasingly being passed onto parents.

One outcome of the review had been the identification that travel for schools was a key problem. A full subsidy on transport costs was provided during the period January 2015 to March 2016 which resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of visitors (approximately double the number). However, the funding and arrangements had proved to be unsustainable and had been withdrawn, resulting in an approximate 50% reduction in the number of visitors (returning to previous levels).

In a bid to address this issue, staff at Safeside and within the Community Safety Team had been asked to explore options and opportunities for further funding such as sponsorship, with a temporary measure put in place. However, the need to resolve the issue of funding remained.

In answer to Member's questions and comments, the following points were raised:

- The Service had explored pupil premium and the funding of vulnerable children within schools. However, it was found that schools decided how such funding was spent, with it normally spent internally, and not on things such as transport.
- The approach taken to Safeside was for the facility to be self-funding, which it was. However, travel (how people get there), was not funded.
- The costing model was based on the self-funding approach; if the cost charged for visitors to attend was decreased, the difference would have to be made up from elsewhere.
- Members had a responsibility to communicate and to act as champions of the Safeside facility, in particular section 41 Members who could raise the profile of Safeside when reporting back to their respective local authorities.

- The Service was actively engaging with schools as part of its engagement strategy, although the situation had differed due to the establishment of free schools, etc.
- Alternative funding options and opportunities had been and still were being explored including possible opportunities under the Social Value Act.

It was agreed that ACFO Taylor would provide a further update at the next meeting including further analysis, ideas and options. Members input and ideas would also be appreciated.

It was agreed that the manager of Safeside, Carol Morgan, would attend the next meeting with ACFO Taylor.

Resolved:-

ACFO Taylor to provide a further update including further analysis (including a breakdown of schools visited / engaged with), ideas and options at the committee meeting scheduled to take place in November.

Carol Morgan, Children and Young People Manager to attend the November meeting.

27/16 **Water Rescue**

ACFO Taylor presented an overview of the briefing note on water rescue:

The briefing note had been submitted to the Committee following the request for more information on water rescue which had been made by Councillor Young at the committee meeting held in September.

As part of the overview, the following points were raised:

- There were more fatalities as a result of water than fire.
- More fatalities due to water occurred inland than on the coast.
- WMFS water rescue capability consisted of:
 - Level 1: Water Awareness – WMFS voluntary water rescue swimmer
 - Level 2: Water Rescue First Responder
 - Level 3: Water Rescue Technician

- Level 4: Water Rescue Power Boat Operator
- Level 5: Water Incident Management
- Level 6: Subject Matter Advisors

Note: see briefing note for full details

- WMFS was the most inland metropolitan FRS, but covered an area that has lots of canals and open water. Additionally, the Service provided support nationally.
- The response standard for water rescue was slightly longer than the 5 minute response, mainly due to the specialised equipment required by firefighters. The response time for the year to date was 7 minutes which was largely due to flooding and spate conditions which had been experienced.

28/16 **Scrutiny Work Programme 2016/17**

The Committee noted the progress of the work programme for 2016/17.

It was confirmed that the update on the data sharing review would be presented at the committee meeting scheduled to be held in November.

It was agreed that the Committee would consider the theme for the next review to be undertaken by the Scrutiny Committee.

(Meeting ended at 13:17 pm)

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