

**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**16 NOVEMBER 2015**

**1. REVIEW OF PARTNERSHIPS - 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 Partnerships 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 Partnerships 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 2015 the Scrutiny Committee commissioned a review of all aspects of the Service's partnerships 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 In leading the review, the Members Working Group has been engaged in the review and has:
  - Met all Partnership Officers
  - Met a cross section of Community Risk Reduction Officers

- Met regularly with the Community Safety Manager
- Spoken to a limited number of station personnel
- Participated in a home safety check

3.4 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 confirm the purpose of the central supporting team (currently known as the Community Safety Team), its leadership arrangements, and appropriate roles and responsibilities. This will enable for continuous improvement, value for money and will put the Service in a better position to maintain and improve its performance around partnership governance, partnership referral pathways and the evaluation of partnership activity per-se.

### **Commissioning**

3.5 The scope of the review, quite rightly looked at the 'as is' in terms of how the Service delivers its partnership responsibilities and the partnerships we're involved with. In general, it was recognised that the Service works with a range of multi agency partners to deliver improved outcomes and support the delivery of The Plan in making the West Midlands safer. However, due to the fast changing political and funding landscape, commissioning has emerged as a viable means of balancing our budget whilst improving the lives of the most vulnerable. This will be achieved by providing services that have traditionally been provided by public health agencies. To this end, the Service has set an expectation that it will raise £2Million per year in commissioning by 2018/19.

3.6 The current structure of local partnership resources working with the Command Team and Service Delivery teams to deliver local priorities is appropriate. Given the broad commonalities, in terms of skill sets, behaviours and relationships that exist between partnerships roles/ activity and commissioning, aligned to the Service's ongoing funding reductions, the Service should consider widening the scope of its partnership roles to embrace commissioning. This is reflected in the proposals made in the review report. Such an approach will require a re-consideration and re-design of key partnership roles such as the Partnership Officer and Community Risk Reduction Officers. In developing new roles, the input of Operations Commanders, who are accountable for local performance, will be essential to shaping, influencing and redefining role requirements.

- 3.7 Similarly, Operations Commanders should be involved in re-shaping the structure, roles and responsibilities of the HQ 'support' function. This will be important in helping to determine whether commissioning is mainstreamed into or is separate from a redesigned HQ Community Safety type function.
- 3.8 The full range of proposals are contained within the Review of Partnerships report (Appendix 2) and are set out separately as Appendix 3. The proposals will enable for
- a more linear leadership team in community safety and clarification of the role of this central resource in enabling the local delivery of partnerships and commissioning expectations
  - re-consideration of the structure, role and required skill sets of a single HQ central team in enabling Command Teams to deliver both its partnership and commissioning work
  - the establishment of effective governance and performance evaluation arrangements both locally and centrally to enable for assurance to be provided that partnerships (and commissions) are provided in line with Service expectations
  - the role of Command partnerships resources to be re-determined to enable a localised commissioned based approach, consistent with the Service's delivery model
  - maintained and improved performance against existing prevention performance indicators.

#### 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**

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, the requirement to make ongoing financial savings of circa £14M by 2018/19 must be considered in all decisions appertaining to future structure and posts.
- 6.2 Similarly, in re-designing both the HQ structure and roles and Command partnership teams, in line with the proposals in this report will better position the Service in meeting its expectation of £2M per year to be secured through commissioning.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Scrutiny Committee, Scope for review of Partnerships 16 February 2015  
Scrutiny Working Group, Awareness Building, March 2015  
Scrutiny Committee, Partnerships Update, 17 August 2015  
Supporting Review papers - Held in Strategic Hub

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COUNCILLOR TRANTER  
CHAIR OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE