

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

9 DECEMBER, 2013

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**INTERIM RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PUBLIC
CONSULTATION REVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY
STRATEGY 2013-2016**

Report of the Clerk and Monitoring Officer.

1. **RECOMMENDED**

That the interim findings of the Public Consultation Review of the Community Safety Strategy 2013-2016, as contained within the Appendix, be approved.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report has been prepared to seek approval of the interim findings of the Public Consultation Review of the Community Safety Strategy 2013-2016.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The role and terms of reference for the Scrutiny Committee were approved by the Authority at its meeting on 25 March 2012. The terms of reference outline that part of the role of the Scrutiny Committee is to carry out a minimum of two scrutiny reviews per annum selected by the Committee.
- 3.2 The Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 8 April 2013 agreed to consider the public consultation process in relation to the Authority's Community Safety Strategy as part of its work programme. This was due to the seemingly poor response rate to a consultation exercise on the Community Safety Strategy.
- 3.3 The Committee established a working group to take forward and gather evidence for the review. This was supported by officers and various witnesses to ensure that the group received relevant information. The group met on 24 June, 15 July and 9 September, 2013. The interim findings of the Scrutiny Committee are now attached and the recommendations for approval are as follows:-

Recommendation		Responsible Officer/Member
1.	To create awareness of the stakeholder analysis project and desired outcomes with key internal stakeholders such as Operations Commanders, the Community Safety Team and key frontline personnel.	Community Safety, Corporate Communications
2.	To identify the existing stakeholder engagement with community groups and third sector organisations throughout the Command areas and to map against the demographic profile and vulnerable people profile.	Community Safety, Equality and Diversity
3.	To ascertain the quality of stakeholder engagement and to consider if this is proportionately appropriate with regards to the demographic profile and needs of that community group.	Equality and Diversity, Corporate Communications
4.	That where there is a gap in intelligence in relation to stakeholder engagement, to establish contact and ascertain the needs of the community and determine whether these needs align with West Midlands Fire Service's objectives set out in 'The Plan'.	Community Safety, Equality and Diversity, Corporate Communications
5.	To identify any gaps that the Service needs to consider with regard to their community engagement and to provide recommendations for Area Commanders to consider.	Community Safety, Corporate Communications
6.	That Area Commanders work with the Equality and Diversity and Corporate Communications Teams in order to determine the priorities within the public consultation work and to agree an action plan to close the gaps, to be presented to the Scrutiny Committee for approval.	Operations, Equality and Diversity, Corporate Communications
7.	That a delivery programme of local actions to address any gaps in stakeholder engagement for future public consultation processes is implemented with periodic reviews and measures against desired outcomes.	Equality and Diversity, Corporate Communications

Recommendation		Responsible Officer/Member
8.	That the format of future consultation questions be reviewed so that they are more open, do not lead the respondent and are not repetitive in nature.	Corporate Communications
9.	That a focus group/user group be established to receive customer feedback on potential questions, to reframe questions used in the 2012/13 consultation and to identify key people for future public consultation exercises, for e.g. community group leaders.	Corporate Communications
10.	That Section 41 members liaise with elected members from their respective councils and that Section 41 members be involved in future consultation exercises as they have a key network of contacts and can promote local events.	Section 41 members
11.	To undertake comparative exercises on how consultation is carried out in other fire authorities and local authorities, including performance and methodology.	Corporate Communications
12.	To continue to build “warm” relationships with the media, senior officers and Section 41 members.	All
13.	To analyse who regularly Tweets on the Fire website in order to target them on future consultation exercises.	Corporate Communications
14.	To use various promotional events at local fire stations to engage with the community and use station personnel to promote the public consultation process and build upon their local community links.	All
15.	To build a database of contact details of members of the public who are interested in being consulted in future public consultation exercises providing the Service gives respondents clear reasons for collecting their contact details.	Corporate Communications

Recommendation		Responsible Officer/Member
16.	To undertake any further work to ascertain why there was a low online response rate to public consultation, in particular, analysing whether the use of more closed questions would be more effective.	Corporate Communications

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out as there are no policy changes proposed.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

None

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications. It is not anticipated that additional resources will be required to implement the recommendations.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Governance of the Authority 2012/13 Report, 25 June 2012
The Centre for Public Scrutiny Good Scrutiny Guide

NEERAJ SHARMA
CLERK AND MONITORING OFFICER

Contact Officer
Rosemary Jones
Democratic Lead
Democratic Services Unit
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Tel: 0121 569 3896