

**Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee**

**2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2014 at 10.00 am**  
**at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham**

**Present:** Councillor Chambers (Chair);  
Councillor Spence (Vice-Chair);  
Councillors Hogarth, Tranter and Young.

12/14 **Former Councillor Wright**

Members asked that their thanks be extended to former Councillor Tim Wright for his contribution to the Fire Authority and in particular to his work for the Scrutiny Committee.

13/14 **Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 31st March, 2014 be approved as a correct record.

With regard to Minute No. 9/14 (An Analysis of Progress of Corporate Performance against 'The Plan' – Quarter Three 2013/14), the Committee asked that the documents requested be re-circulated to them.

14/14 **Operational Assessment Update**

Further to Minute No. 34/13, the Committee received a report on the progress made by the organisation in addressing areas for consideration (afc) detailed in the Operational Assessment Improvement Register. Of the 12 afc items noted by the Committee in the last report in November, 2013, ten had been completed and only 2 were still outstanding and related to a wider ongoing project being led by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

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This project, relating to pre-inspections of high risk premises, was on target to deliver by July 2014 and it was therefore suggested that no further updates on the Improvement Register to the Committee were required and that the Register was signed off as completed.

An independent evaluation of Operational Assessment (OpA), whilst making a number of recommendations for change, reflected that in overall terms OpA and Peer Challenge were fit for purpose for supporting service delivery improvement. Following on from this the Chief Fire Officers' Association and the Local Government Association were refreshing the toolkit and peer challenge process to ensure that they remained up to date and relevant. The Service was committed to shaping and influencing sector improvement and had an established track record in supporting the development and improvement of OpA since its inception in 2009. How the Service's senior officers supported this continued improvement was reported.

Members commended the work of the Service in addressing the afc detailed on the OpA Improvement Register.

**Resolved:-**

- (1) that the progress made in addressing the areas for consideration detailed in the Operational Assessment Improvement Register arising from the OpA and Peer Challenge, July 2012 be noted;
- (2) that the OpA Improvement Register be signed off as completed;
- (3) that the ongoing sector refreshment of the OpA toolkit and peer challenge process and the involvement of senior West Midlands Fire Service officers be noted.

15/14 **Findings of the Firefighters Recruitment Process Review**

The Chair presented the findings of the Firefighters Recruitment Process Review.

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The Committee had established a working group to take forward and gather evidence for the review, supported by officers and various witnesses in order to ensure that the group received relevant information. Members of the group had also been invited to observe the written tests and practical tests allowing members to talk to candidates and assessors alike.

The Chair gave compliments to all of the individuals concerned throughout the recruitment process for their professionalism and to the applicants for their camerarderie, particularly during the practical tests.

The Vice-Chair requested that she receive a further breakdown of the number of the percentage of applicants who stated that they had a GCSE in English into figures and percentages of black ethnic minorities and women.

The recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee would be considered for approval by the Executive Committee at its meeting to be held on 9<sup>th</sup> June, 2014.

**Resolved:-**

- (1) that, subject to the addition of the responsible officers' names to the review recommendations, the findings of the Firefighters Recruitment Process Review and the recommendations, as set out in the Appendix, be approved;
- (2) that the Monitoring Officer submit the revised findings of the Firefighters Recruitment Process Review to the Executive Committee at its meeting on 9 June, 2014.

16/14 **Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee**

The Committee received the Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee 2013/14. The report detailed the business undertaken by the Committee to date during the 2013/14 Municipal Year.

It was suggested that the Report be updated to include the conclusion of the Firefighters Recruitment Process Review and its submission to the Executive Committee.

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Members also asked that feedback on the Review of Safeside be incorporated into the work programme of the Committee in the next Municipal Year and that the report include details of what had been done to assist with the provision of transport to the site for schools in deprived areas.

**Resolved** that, subject to the addition of the Firefighters Recruitment Process Review to the achievements of the Committee, the Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee 2013/14 be approved and presented to the next meeting of the Authority.

17/14 **Work Programme 2013/14**

Members noted the work programme for 2013/2014. As indicated in Minute No. 16/14 above, an update on the Review of Safeside would be included in the work programme for 2014/15 and with regard to encouraging more visits from schools it was requested that they be asked to consider the use of their pupil premium or area partnership monies to assist to this end.

With regard to reviewing the assessment tool which had been developed to prioritise those Fire Stations most critical to service delivery (Building Asset Strategy – Authority Minute No. 83/13 refers) it was agreed that this information be provided to members by way of a briefing note.

18/14 **Thanks to the Chair**

The Chair thanked members and officers for their support in the work of the Committee in the 2013/14 Municipal Year.

Members thanked the Chair for able, efficient and courteous way he had managed the business of the Committee during the 2013/2014 Municipal Year. They also wished him well for the future.

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(Meeting ended at 10.46 am)

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