

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3 SEPTEMBER 2019

1. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Report of the Clerk.

THAT the Committee note the amended Terms of Reference.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is submitted for member comment and noting.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The terms of reference for the Scrutiny Committee were submitted to the Fire Authority at the Annual General Meeting held on 24 June 2019 (Governance of the Authority 2019/2020 – Appendix 2). The terms of reference are provided to the Committee for the purposes of familiarisation for Members. It should be noted that the terms of reference were revised with the following addition:

- To review and scrutinise strategic performance information of the Shared Fire Control on a bi-annual basis

3.2 The addition is a result of governance changes within Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority (with the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner now responsible for Fire), and the disestablishment of the Shared Fire Control Governance Board, following agreement that future governance was to be incorporated within both Service's existing governance structures.

- 3.3 All other elements of the terms of reference remain the same as per 2018/2019.

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 will not lead to and do not relate to a policy change.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no particular legal requirements for the Authority to establish a Scrutiny Committee; it is however, considered good practice for authorities to have a vehicle through which monitoring and review of the Authority's policies and practices can be undertaken.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising as a result of the content of this report. Advice may be provided internally by Officers at no direct cost to the Authority, supporting the Committee in its work. The Scrutiny Committee can, if required, access resources to be able to engage external professional advice where applicable.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Governance of the Authority 2019/2020

The contact name for this report is Karen Gowreesunker, Clerk to the Authority, Strategic Enabler – Strategic Hub, telephone number 0121 380 6678.

Karen Gowreesunker
Clerk to the Authority

Scrutiny Committee – Terms of Reference

Additions are highlighted

In line with expectations set out in the Fire and Rescue National Framework the Authority has established a Scrutiny Committee to support it in achieving its strategic objectives and ensuring that its policy and budgetary framework is followed and developed to reflect the changing needs and demands in meeting its statutory obligations.

The main purpose of the scrutiny function is to:

- i) Inform Policy Development
(i.e. pre-decision scrutiny – to provide a political steer before a decision is taken/implemented. The Committee may do this by calling in matters considered at the Policy Planning Forum stage).
- ii) Hold Officers and the Service to Account
(i.e. the Committee may call-in decisions for scrutiny before they are implemented, may examine decisions that have already been implemented and may call upon officers to respond to its enquiries).
- iii) Hold the Authority to Account:
(i.e. the Committee may call-in decisions for scrutiny before they are implemented, may examine decisions that have already been implemented and may call upon relevant members to respond to its enquiries).
- iv) Conduct Reviews into Specific Issues:
(i.e. the Committee will identify matters that it wishes to conduct reviews into and call the relevant officers and members to assist it in carrying out those reviews).

In carrying out its role the Committee may look at both operational and strategic issues.

Role and Functions:

To carry out a maximum of two scrutiny reviews per annum selected by the Committee. Such reviews will be member-led and evidence based, and will produce SMART (specific, measurable,

attainable, realistic and timely) recommendations to the Authority.

To track and monitor the implementation of review recommendations that are accepted by the Authority.

To summon any officer or member of the Authority to give account in respect of reviews or any other relevant matter.

To manage, in consultation with the Strategic Enabler for Finance and Resources, a specific budget for the purpose of buying in any necessary external advice and support in connection with the reviews.

To receive and scrutinise performance information including progress against the Community Safety Strategy and 'The Plan', the Service's objectives and corporate performance indicators and review performance targets.

To review and scrutinise strategic performance information of the Shared Fire Control on a bi-annual basis.

To have responsibility for scrutiny of Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality throughout the West Midlands Fire Service and to review policies and monitor performance in relation thereto.

To monitor and scrutinise as appropriate the Authority's People Support policies.

To monitor and scrutinise sickness levels, promotion policies and employee exit information.

To receive information and statistics on grievance monitoring and to report outcomes to the Joint Consultative Panel.

To ensure that the Authority is meeting its duties under Health & Safety and environmental and other relevant legislation.

To deal with any matters referred to it by the full Authority, the Policy Planning Forum, the Chief Fire Officer, Clerk, Monitoring Officer or Treasurer, not within its work programme.

To refer any matter for consideration by the Authority, another Committee or an officer where considered appropriate.

To submit its minutes and an Annual Report to the Authority.

In order to allow for separation of the scrutiny and decision making functions, findings and recommendations of Scrutiny reviews will be presented to the Authority by the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee. Members (excluding substitutes) of the Scrutiny Committee shall not vote on matters arising from Scrutiny reviews.

The Committee will sit in public with minimum exceptions.

In addition to its programmed meetings, the Committee will hold additional meetings, as and when required, in order to efficiently manage its workload.