

Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee

10 October 2018 at 10:00 a.m.
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham B7
4HW

Present: Councillor Tranter (Chair).
Councillors Barrie, Brackenridge, Jenkins and
Spence.
S Middleton.

Apologies: Councillors Barlow and Young.

Observer: Nil

26/18 Declarations of Interest in contracts or other matters

There were no declarations of interest.

27/18 Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 12
September 2018

Discussion regarding the minutes resulted in the following points being raised:

- Work to develop the Safeguarding Review was progressing. A scope had been provided to an external company which would assess the scope and identify a suitable specialist to assist with the review.
- Meetings of the Safeguarding Review working group would be called once the specialist had been confirmed.
- It was noted that the go live date of the pre-alert system (previously noted as October / November 2018) had been delayed due to the supplier's inability to meet the deadline for delivery.

- It was anticipated that the pre-alert system would now go live in March / April 2019.

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on the 12 September 2018 be approved as a correct record.

28/18 Dispute Resolution Report

Helen Sherlock, Senior Business Partner, People Support Services, provided an overview of the report:

The report covered the period 1 January 2018 to 30 June 2018.

Five grievances had been received during the reporting period; three related to Bullying and Harassment, and two related to issues regarding Terms and Conditions of employment. One case of Bullying and Harassment was upheld and a subsequent management enquiry was commissioned which was ongoing at the time of the meeting. The other four grievances were not upheld.

The Service was in receipt of two Employment Tribunals that were related to two of the Grievances received during the reporting period.

There had been 14 disciplinary cases during the reporting period; 11 at Gross Misconduct and three at Misconduct. One incident had led to eight disciplinary cases, all of which had been pursued to formal hearings, resulting in two individuals being dismissed although one individual had been reappointed following an appeal. The remaining six individuals received formal warnings.

Helen Sherlock advised that a report had been submitted to the Joint Consultative Panel (JCP) in September 2018 detailing a review of Case Management Debriefs. The report covered all learning from debriefs conducted for the reporting period. Following this, a summary of debriefs and learning and actions identified would be included in future reports to the Scrutiny Committee as well as to the JCP.

In answer to Members' questions, the following points were raised:

- The amount of detail and information provided in the report was restricted to ensure individuals could not be identified.
- The number and level of cases was consistent with previous reporting periods. An overview of reporting periods for the current and previous reporting periods was provided in table format within the appendix to allow comparison.
- Business Partners within People Support Services and middle managers carried out initial investigations into possible disciplinary action. The decision whether to escalate a case to Gross Misconduct level was the decision of the Strategic Enabler People Support Services.
- Work was being carried out to formalise the debrief process and to enhance the capture of any learning identified. This would in turn help to improve processes and procedures.

Resolved that the Dispute Resolution Report be submitted to the Joint Consultative Panel.

29/18 Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2018/19

Karen Gowreesunker, Clerk to the Authority and Strategic Enabler of the Strategic Hub advised that the Operational Assessment Improvement Register had been originally scheduled in the work programme to be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee at this meeting. However, the intention was to close the Improvement Register and as result, the report would now be submitted at the November meeting.

The Committee noted the Work Programme for 2018/19.

The meeting finished at 10:33pm.

Contact Officer: Stephen Timmington Strategic Hub West Midlands Fire Service 0121 380 6680
