

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

27 SEPTEMBER 2021

1. ANNUAL REPORT FROM SANDWELL AUDIT IN RESPECT OF INFORMATION GOVERNANCE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

1.1 RECOMMENDED

THAT the Committee note the contents of the report.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 This report provides the assurance from internal audit at Sandwell MBC in relation to how the organisation discharges its duties and responsibilities in relation to information governance.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Annually, Sandwell Audit Team conduct a themed audit that examines an aspect of how information is managed within the organisation.

3.2 The theme for financial year 2020-2021 was the handling of subject access requests under the Data Protection Act 2018.

3.3 The audit was delayed slightly because of the Coronavirus pandemic and the availability of staff at Sandwell MBC and West Midlands Fire Service.

3.4 The overall assurance assessment was 'Substantial assurance'.

3.5 There were two areas identified for improvement:

- 3.5.1 Response times for some subject access requests were outside the 30-calendar day statutory limit.
- 3.5.2 Some requests were missing from the monthly reports to the Strategic Enabling Team (SET).
- 3.5.3 Remediation and improvements are in progress.
- 3.5.4 One area has already been addressed with the introduction of a PowerBi dashboard for SET members to see requests in real time instead of monthly reports.
- 3.5.5 The second area will be remediated using automated searching, retention and archiving tools.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 4.1 This is not required as this report does not impact any positive characteristics.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 It is considered best practice for organisations to provide assurance in relation to its performance in relation to information governance legislation.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 None.

7. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

The contact name for this report is Assistant Chief Fire Officer Gary Taylor SIRO, telephone number 0121 380 6006.

PHIL LOACH
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Ref: AU/AC/2021/Sep/215609211