

Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee

17 August 2015 at 10.30pm
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham

Present: Councillor Tranter (Chair);
Councillor Spence (Vice Chair);
Councillors Barrie, Hogarth, Singh, Skinner
and Ward

Apology: Councillor Young

Observer: Not applicable

14/15 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2015, be approved as a correct record, subject to the following amendments in respect of minute 12/15 (An Analysis of Progress of Quarterly Performance against 'The Plan' – Quarter Four 2014/2015):

- Paragraph four, final sentence to state 'it was suggested that the Committee could seek to support progress in this area by carrying out a piece of work to look at the effectiveness of the Service's human resources policies *for this area*'.
- Paragraph seven to state 'Resolved that an item be placed on the Scrutiny Committee's work programme for 2015/2016 to review the effectiveness of the Service's *Human Resources policies that relate to positive action strategies*'.

15/15 **Partnerships Review Update**

The Committee noted the progress made in the review of the Service's partnership arrangements.

Jim Whittingham, Strategic Hub, thanked the members of the working group for their help in the review to date, including their engagement with Partnership Officers and Community Risk Reduction Officers, visiting station based staff, and participating in a home safety check.

The review has highlighted the importance to recognise the changing landscape of partnerships, in particular the need for partnership arrangements to be fine-tuned with regard to capturing opportunities for commissioning within the wider health and well being arena.

A number of learning points, opportunities for change set out in the covering report were discussed and it was agreed that these should be considered as areas for improvement in the final report. It was agreed that commissioning will enable the opportunity to realign and review the community safety team and management structure as well as re-determining the resources and roles of current command partnership resources in delivering the Service's commissioning aspirations, to ensure it is in the best place to provide the best service for the organisation.

It was recognised that the governance of partnerships is an area that requires improvement. Subsequently, the rating of the corporate risk associated with management of partnerships had been raised.

It was acknowledged that partnership arrangements, including the related support mechanisms, may be impacted upon by reviews that are being undertaken across the organisation, for example, the reviews of the Contact Centre and Fire Control and this will be considered in the final report.

It was noted that a report on the partnership review would be presented to the Committee for consideration at the October 2015 meeting.

Following an enquiry from a member regarding prevention work carried out in relation to deliberate fire setting and antisocial behaviour, it was noted that such work had previously been undertaken under the guise of the Arson Task Force. Funding for this function had ceased and it had been subsequently disbanded. It

was agreed that this would be examined to identify if there were any gaps, and this would be fed back to the member via the Committee.

A member advised the Committee of the collaborative model which is piloting collaborative arrangements, particularly data sharing, within the Coventry area. The member agreed to contact the lead of the collaborative model.

16/15

Positive Action Strategy for Recruitment, Progression and Retention

Further to Minute No. 12/15 (15 June 2015), the Committee noted the report submitted on the Positive Action Strategy for Recruitment, Progression and Retention, which provided a strategic overview of the Service's strategic approach to positive action and the current, and future proposals for positive action initiatives within the scope of the Service's Diversity, Equality, Inclusion and Cohesion (DICE) work.

Following the introduction of the recruitment freeze, it was agreed that the Service should maintain a fully co-ordinated approach to positive action, focussing on elements including staff retention and promotion. Although it was acknowledged that the recruitment freeze may have an impact on promotion opportunities as the establishment reduces, the Service remains confident that opportunities will still exist at all levels of the organisation. Members of staff with high potential will continue to be recognised and barriers removed (where they exist), using a pro-active approach via liaison with respective line managers and business partners within People Support Services, when vacancies arise.

Additionally, the Service will continue to promote the role of the Fire Service externally, challenging stereotypes and removing potential barriers that may prevent potential new applicants from considering applying to join the Service when the recruitment freeze is eventually lifted.

17/15

An Analysis of Progress of Quarterly Performance Against 'The Plan' – Quarter One 2015/2016

The Committee received an overview of the status of the Service's corporate performance indicators for quarter one of 2015/2016, along with progress made in delivering the three strategic objectives contained in 'The Plan' 2015-2018.

The Committee noted that overall, performance was very good across all performance indicators, in particular the performance reported for the Risk Based Attendance Standards.

Members were reminded of the open invitation to attend the Quarterly Performance Review meetings.

18/15

Work Programme 2015/2016

The Committee received the initial work programme for 2015/2016 which was accepted with the following amendment:

Resolved that the item noted against 17 August 2015 on the work programme, 'Review of Human Resources Policies (People Support Services)', be rephrased to 'Review of Human Resources Policies (People Support Services) *that relate to positive action strategies*'.

(Meeting ended at 12:15 pm)

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