

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1 NOVEMBER 2021

1. **SCRUTINY REVIEWS FOR CONSIDERATION**

Report of the Clerk.

- 1.1 THAT the Scrutiny Committee consider the next themes for review.
- 1.2 THAT the Scrutiny Committee consider and approve prevention – Safe and Well as the next theme for review, in light of discussions and resolutions at previous meetings of the Committee.
- 1.3 THAT the Scrutiny Committee schedule the review within the Committee’s work programme.
- 1.4 THAT the Scrutiny Committee consider the approach to engaging with Members to refresh themes for future scrutiny reviews.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 2.1 This report is submitted to refresh the Scrutiny Committee on the themes previously discussed with Members to be considered for review by the Scrutiny Committee, with a view to approve and schedule such a review within the Committee’s work programme.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Committee sets out the role of the Committee, the main purpose of the Scrutiny function being to:

- inform policy development
 - hold Officers and the Service to account
 - hold the Authority to account
 - conduct pre or post scrutiny reviews into specific issues.
- 3.2 This final point is further elaborated upon within the Terms of Reference as follows: *'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.'*
- 3.3 As part of its role and functions, the Committee is 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'.
- 3.4 The Committee was due to consider themes for scrutiny reviews at its meeting on 24 March 2020, but this meeting was cancelled due to the COVID pandemic and the Service operating under business continuity arrangements.

4. **CONSIDERATIONS FOR SCRUTINY REVIEW THEMES**

- 4.1 A Scrutiny Review workshop was held at the conclusion of the Policy Planning Forum held on 17 September 2019, where Members considered themes which could form the basis of future reviews to be undertaken by the Scrutiny Committee:
- Business Continuity Arrangements
 - Prevention – Safe and Well
 - Operational training and effectiveness
 - Discipline Policy
- 4.2 A report outlining the themes was subsequently submitted to the Committee at its meeting on 7 October 2019 (see background papers). The outcomes of the meeting were that:

- the Committee agreed to undertake the review of the Service's business continuity arrangements. The review was undertaken over a period of three consecutive meetings, with the recommendation of the Committee being submitted for consideration by the Fire Authority on 18 November 2019.
- the Committee agreed to undertake a review of the performance of prevention activities, in particular the delivery of Safe and Well visits including a focus on the quantity versus quality of Safe and Well visits undertaken.
- the Committee agreed that the themes of operational training and effectiveness and discipline policy would be the subject of a Members' awareness session. To this end, Members received employment law training on 27 January 2020 which covered topics including the wider discipline policy.

4.3 In light of the above and based on resolutions of previous meetings of the Committee, it is recommended that Members consider confirming that prevention – Safe and Well will be the next theme to be reviewed and that the review is scheduled within the Committee's work programme. This will align to the original intent but can also take into account how these have evolved over and post the pandemic period, as well as how these can develop to continue to meet the needs of our vulnerable communities and individuals.

4.4 Members of the Committee may want to consider re-engaging through an additional discussion with the Fire Authority, to consider refreshed themes for future scrutiny reviews.

5. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

5.1 In preparing this report, an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out. The matters contained within this report will not lead to a policy change.

6. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 There are no direct legal implications arising out of this report.

7. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 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

Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference
Scrutiny Reviews – Scrutiny Committee 07.10.19
Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee – 11.11.19

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