

Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee

**10 September, 2012, at 1.00pm
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham**

Present: Councillor Chambers (Chair);
Councillor Spence (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Delaney, Eustace, Hogarth, Tranter,
Wright and Young.

7/12 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 July, 2012 be approved as a correct record, subject to minor amendments as reported by the Clerk's representative.

8/12 Scrutiny Training Provision

Further to Minute No. 2/12 (23 July, 2012) it was reported that the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CPFS) had been approached with regards to providing training for Committee members. The CPFS had contacted its pool of expert advisors and one expression of interest had been received.

The Committee noted a proposed training programme and associated costs. It was agreed that all Authority members would be invited to attend in order to achieve best value for money and the invitation would be extended to officers if necessary to fill places.

9/12 An Analysis of Progress of Corporate Performance Against 'The Plan' – Quarter Four 2011/2012

The Committee noted an analysis of organisational performance against 'The Plan' for the fourth quarter of 2011/2012.

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Targets were being met against a range of performance indicators. Performance was below target on the number of arson fires in non-domestic premises (PI 6); the number of arson rubbish fires (PI 8).

The Committee noted that due to reduced budgets it was no longer viable to provide free smoke alarms to the whole community and the focus was now on providing them for the most vulnerable groups. However, home fire safety checks would still be carried out to anyone who requested one.

Members noted that performance was below target for the average number of days/shifts lost due to due sickness for non-uniformed and fire control staff (PI 27) and asked if consideration had been given to introducing new methods of managing sickness, for example, the Bradford Factor. The Director Operations (on behalf of the Director Human Resources) reported that the Bradford Factor had been considered, however, effective management of staff to reducing sickness. It was highlighted that the average number of days/shifts lost to sickness for all staff (PI 28) was improving. Members requested a report to the next meeting on the implications of using the Bradford Factor in a fire service context.

Of the 12 strategic objectives set out in The Plan, three were ahead of schedule, eight were on schedule, and one was behind schedule.

Members noted that the risk rating level for Risks Nos. 1 and 5 in the Corporate Risk Register had been reduced from 'High' to 'Medium'.

Resolved that a report be submitted to the Committee on the implications of using the Bradford Factor for managing sickness in a fire service context.

10/12 Scrutiny Work Programme 2012/2013

The Committee noted its work programme for 2013/2013. The Clerk reported that the progress report on the implementation of outcomes of the Operational Peer Assessment would be submitted to the Committee in November, 2012.

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11/12 Exclusion of the Public and Press

Resolved that the public and press be excluded from the rest of the meeting. This is to avoid the possible disclosure of exempt information under Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 relating to an individual.

12/12 Disciplinary and Grievance Monitoring

The Committee received a report on the number, type and outcomes of discipline and grievance hearings and employment tribunal activity that had occurred between 1 January and 30 June 2012. It was noted that there had been no collective grievances within the reporting period.

Proactive management and HR support had helped to reduce the number of cases progressing to a formal level.

The report also provided a summary of lessons learned taking into account issues that had been raised by the representative bodies, line managers and HR practitioners.

Resolved that that the report be submitted to the Joint Consultative Panel.

(Meeting ended at 2.07 pm)

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