

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9 OCTOBER 2017

1. OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT IMPROVEMENT REGISTER

Report of the Chief Fire Officer.

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT the Committee note and comment on the contents of the Operational Assessment (OpA) Improvement Register which is attached as Appendix 1. The Improvement Register details the Service's response to addressing the 'areas for consideration' identified by the Fire Peer Challenge Team as part of the Service's OpA.
- 1.2 THAT the Committee note that the Service will utilise its existing planning and performance frameworks to implement and monitor performance in addressing the 'areas for consideration' arising from OpA.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 This report is submitted to inform the Committee of the content of the OpA Improvement Register and the approach to be taken in addressing the 'areas for consideration' identified by the Fire Peer Challenge Team and detailed within the West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) Operational Assessment and Peer Challenge Report which was published in June 2017. The content of the WMFS OpA and Peer Challenge Report was noted by Members at the meeting of the Fire Authority on 26 June 2017 (agenda item 16).
- 2.2 It was confirmed at the meeting of the Fire Authority that an OpA Improvement Register would be produced and used as a means of capturing and monitoring performance in addressing the 'areas for consideration' detailed within the WMFS OpA and Peer Challenge Report.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Service conducted the fire sector specific OpA during the summer of 2016, which comprised a self-assessment against the seven key assessment areas detailed within the OpA toolkit. The self-assessment was submitted to the Fire Peer Challenge Team at the start of September 2016.
- 3.2 The Service undertook a Fire Peer Challenge, welcoming a team of peers from across the fire sector and wider public sector in October 2016, who conducted a four day fieldwork visit. In addition to challenging the self-assessment, the Peer Team considered six core questions under the heading of Leadership and Corporate Capacity (as per the OpA toolkit), as well as consider a number of key themes that the Service had requested the Peer Team consider in more detail.
- 3.3 During the course of the Fire Peer Challenge, the Peer Team interviewed a wide range of employees, stakeholders and partners including the Strategic Enabling Team (SET), the Chair and a cross party section of Members. At the conclusion of the Peer Challenge, the Chair and SET received initial feedback on the Service's performance pending the production of a formal report by the Peer Team.
- 3.4 The final Peer Challenge Report was submitted to the Fire Authority on 26 June 2017 and was published subsequently.
- 3.5 The Peer Challenge Report highlighted a number of areas for consideration based on the findings from the OpA self-assessment and the fire peer challenge visit.
- 3.6 As stated within the OpA toolkit, the OpA and Fire Peer Challenge process is designed to:
- form a structured and consistent basis to drive continuous improvement within the Fire and Rescue Service, and
 - provide elected Members of Fire Authorities, and Chief Officers, with information that allows them to challenge their operational service delivery, and their organisational effectiveness, to ensure they are efficient, effective and robust.

- 3.7 To this end, as noted within the report submitted to the Fire Authority on 26 June 2017, the Service has developed an Improvement Register which is designed to inform Members of the Service's progress in addressing all the agreed areas for consideration outlined in the Peer Challenge Report. It was also noted that the Improvement Register would be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee who will monitor progress against the areas for consideration.
- 3.8 The Improvement Register consists of the areas for consideration highlighted within the Peer Challenge Report. Each area for consideration has been lifted directly from the Peer Challenge Report and grouped under the relevant core question and / or key theme that were considered as part of the Peer Challenge.
- 3.9 In developing the Improvement Register, key stakeholders including all relevant members of SET have been involved and confirmed progress made / work identified to be carried out, and where appropriate, the target date for implementation of the action identified to address the areas for consideration. A number of the areas for consideration were very wide in scope and whilst further clarification was sought from the Peer Challenge team, it has not been possible in some cases to refine the area for consideration to a specific area or function. Some areas for consideration relate to work which constitutes continuous areas for development for the Service (in part due to the wide scope and sometimes high level nature of some of the areas highlighted, and the Service's continued commitment to excellence) and as such have been recorded as complete for the purposes of this exercise (the Improvement Register) and will not be included within future updates provided to the Committee.
- 3.10 It is intended that the work as a result of the Improvement Register will be treated as normal business and as such, it will be integrated into the Service's existing planning and performance management frameworks. Progress updates will be provided to Members via updates every six months at the Scrutiny Committee and members of SET, via the regular SET meeting schedule.
- 3.11 The actions resulting from the Improvement Register will be implemented and managed via the 3PT (portfolio, programme,

project, task) environment. As part of the 3PT process, 'value statements' will be aligned to projects (organisational value statements) and individuals (personal value commitments). 3PT is currently being developed.

- 3.12 Following the establishment of a new inspectorate for fire it is anticipated inspection of the service by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) will start in 2018. It is expected that the new inspectorate will review existing improvement plans as part of the new process. The Local Government Association are currently reviewing the existing Peer Challenge and OpA process to ensure it will be complimentary to the new inspection regime.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

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 directly lead to and/or not directly relate to a policy change.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

It is not a legal requirement to undertake OpA or a peer challenge. However, the Service is committed to performance improvement and is fully supportive of the sector driven approach of taking responsibility for its own performance improvement.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge Toolkit

Policy Planning Forum, OpA presentation by DCFO Phil Hales, 05 September 2016

Policy Planning Forum, OpA Peer Challenge Feedback presentation by CFO Phil Loach, 12 December 2016

Item 16 Fire Authority 26 June 2017 – Operational Assessment and Peer Challenge Report

West Midlands Fire Service OpA and Peer Challenge Report (published June 2017)

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