

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21 OCTOBER 2019

1. **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP – BUSINESS CONTINUITY ARRANGEMENTS**

Report of the CLERK.

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT the Committee review the two options proposed to provide additional business continuity arrangements
- 1.2 THAT the Committee submits its recommendation to the Fire Authority

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report is submitted to support the Committee in its review of the two options proposed to provide additional business continuity arrangements for the Service.

3. **BACKGROUND**

A Policy Planning Forum was held on 17 September 2019. At the meeting, a presentation on the Service's business continuity arrangements was delivered to Members.

Officers had assessed and updated corporate risk 6 'Business Continuity and Preparedness'. The presentation provided an overview of the Service's level of assurance regarding its business continuity arrangements and Members were informed of the options for revising its arrangements.

The Scrutiny Committee requested that the business continuity options be brought before the Committee for scrutiny.

An extra meeting of the Committee was convened on 26 September 2019 in which the business continuity options were considered in more detail including:

- Review of the business continuity information
- Working Group discussion, aligned to questions posed by Members
- Timeline for the review and next steps

The Committee agreed that:

- The proposed options for business continuity arrangements would be the subject of a review by the Scrutiny Committee
- The scope of the review would be to consider the two proposed options for the business continuity arrangements
- The report on the business continuity arrangements which was due to be submitted to the Fire Authority on 30 September 2019 was to be deferred to allow for the completion of the scrutiny review process

As a result of the above, the Committee agreed to a meeting of a Scrutiny Committee Working Group to undertake the review.

4. **WORKING GROUP REVIEW OF BUSINESS CONTINUITY ARRANGEMENTS**

4.1 The Scrutiny Committee Working Group are asked to consider and review the two options proposed to provide additional business continuity arrangements for the Service, the two options being:

1. A contingent workforce
2. An external provider

It should be noted that option 2, the provision of an external provider, is the option recommended by the Chief Fire Officer to the Fire Authority.

4.2 Upon the request of the Committee, representatives from Fire and Rescue Services who currently have business continuity arrangements in place that are similar to the two options being proposed, contractors / suppliers, and the representative bodies have been called as independent witnesses to provide information for consideration by Members.

- 4.3 Additionally, a legal advisor and Officers of the Service are available in an advisory capacity to provide information for consideration by Members.
- 4.4 The information provided by the witnesses and Officers, in addition to the information that Members have already received via the Policy Planning Forum held on 17 September 2019 and the associated Fire Authority Report 'Business Continuity Arrangements', will provide the evidence base for the Committee to come to a decision on the two options that have been put forward by the Service.
- 4.5 Following agreement by Members, the Committee are to submit its recommendation regarding the two options to the Fire Authority at the next scheduled meeting of the Authority, 18 November 2019. The recommendation of the Committee will be submitted in addition to the report on the business continuity arrangements (which had been previously deferred on 30 September 2019).
- 4.6 Members should note that, in accordance with the Committee's terms of reference, 'In order to allow for separation of the scrutiny and decision-making functions, findings and recommendations of Scrutiny reviews will be presented to the Authority by the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee. Members (excluding substitutes) of the Scrutiny Committee shall not vote on matters arising from Scrutiny reviews.'

5. **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 lead to a policy change.

6. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The course of action recommended in this report does not raise issues which should be drawn to the attention of the Authority's Monitoring Officer.

7. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

8. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Policy Planning Forum 17.09.19 – presentation on Business Continuity Arrangements

Fire Authority 30.09.19 – Business Continuity Arrangements Report (report deferred)

Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference

The contact name for this report is Sarah Warnes, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Strategic Enabler - People, telephone number 0121 380 6907.

KAREN GOWREESUNKER
CLERK TO AUTHORITY