

**Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee
2014/15**

1. Background

The Scrutiny Committee was established by the Fire Authority at its Annual General Meeting in 2012. Its purpose is to:

- inform policy development
- hold officers and the Service to account
- conduct reviews into specific issues

The key benefits of the Committee can be seen as:

- Complementing the strategic and policy formulation and development work of the Authority and Service.
- Developing the skills of members to enable them to investigate below the surface of policies, strategies and processes.
- Providing a useful oversight and an element of challenge to performance improvement processes and continuous improvement.
- Encouraging public involvement in the policy process.
- Supporting the development of an environment that stimulates a more reflective, evaluative and evidence based culture within the Authority and Service.

The Terms of Reference for the Committee can be found at Appendix A of this report.

In accordance with its Terms of Reference, and, in addition to its work in relation to the monitoring of performance, the Committee should undertake a minimum of two scrutiny reviews each year. Working groups of three to four members are established to undertake the reviews on behalf of the full Committee, and they meet as and when required, in addition to the scheduled meetings of the Committee. Members of the working groups report progress on reviews to the Committee as appropriate.

2. Meetings

During 2014/15 the Committee met on the following dates:

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|--------------------|
| • 1 September 2014 |
| • 13 October 2014 |
| • 15 December 2014 |
| • 16 February 2015 |
| • 23 March 2015 |
| • 15 June 2015 |

3. Members and Attendance Record

| | 01/09/14 | 13/10/14 | 15/12/14 | 16/02/15 | 23/03/15 | 15/06/15 |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Councillor Collingswood | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | |
| Councillor Delaney | √ | √ | A | A | - | |
| Councillor Hogarth | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | |
| Councillor Phillips | √ | √ | √ | √ | A | |
| Councillor Skinner | √ | A | √ | √ | √ | |
| Councillor Spence | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | |
| Councillor Tranter | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | |
| Councillor Young | √ | √ | √ | √ | A | |

Senior officers from the Authority are also present as appropriate.

Working group meetings have taken place as and when appropriate in addition to the scheduled meetings of the Committee.

4. Business

During the year the Committee conducted the following business:-

- Quarterly Analysis of Corporate Performance against 'The Plan'.
- Quarterly Equality and Diversity Updates.
- Monitoring of Dispute Resolution.

- Monitoring progress on the implementation of recommendations arising from the review of the process for public consultation.
- Work Programme Selection.
- Diversity Inclusion Cohesion Equality (DICE) Report Covering Period September 2014 to March 2015.

A working group was also established to carry out a Review of Partnership Working. This review is expected to be complete in 2015/2016. The Committee has also selected a topic for a further review – Data Sharing with Partners - which will commence in 2015/16.

5. The Committee's main achievements

The Committee believes its key achievements during the year included:-

- The robust monitoring of the Service's performance in the areas of Equality and Diversity, analysis of Corporate Performance against 'The Plan', workforce profile indicators and the Prevention Strategy.
- The Review of Partnership Working being undertaken, with particular emphasis on data sharing protocols, will assist in addressing findings from recent Serious Case Reviews and higher level investigations that data sharing remained a consistent blockage for effective partnership working and was often a contributory factor to poor service. The Review would also assist the Service in better achieving its Performance Indicators of targeting the most vulnerable to receive Home Safety Checks.

Appendix A

Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Committee

To carry out a minimum 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 Executive Committee.

To track and monitor the implementation of review recommendations that are accepted by the Executive Committee.

To summon any officer or member of the Authority to give account in respect of reviews or any other relevant matter.

To manage, in consultation with the Director of Resources, a specific budget for the purpose of buying in any necessary external advice and support in connection with the reviews.

To receive and scrutinise performance information including progress against the Community Safety Strategy and 'The Plan', the Service's objectives and corporate performance indicators and review performance targets.

To have responsibility for scrutiny of equality and diversity throughout the West Midlands Fire Service and to review policies and monitor performance in relation thereto.

To monitor and scrutinise as appropriate the Authority's HR policies.

To monitor and scrutinise sickness levels, promotion policies and employee exit information.

To receive information and statistics on grievance monitoring and to report outcomes to the Joint Consultative Panel.

To ensure that the Authority is meeting its duties under Health & Safety and environmental and other relevant legislation.

To deal with any matters referred to it by the full Authority, the Policy Planning Forum or Executive Committee, the Chief Fire Officer, Clerk and Monitoring Officer or Treasurer, not within its work programme.

To refer any matter for consideration by the Authority, another Committee or an officer where considered appropriate.

To submit its minutes and an Annual Report to the Authority.

In order to allow for separation of the scrutiny and decision making functions, members of the Scrutiny Committee shall not sit on the Executive Committee.

The Committee will sit in public with minimum exceptions.

In addition to its programmed meetings, the Committee will hold additional meetings, as and when required, in order to efficiently manage its workload.