

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY		
DATE:	3 RD JULY 2019	REPORT NO:	CFO/041/19
PRESENTING OFFICER	THE MONITORING OFFICER		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	JANET HENSHAW	REPORT AUTHOR:	KELLY KELLAWAY – DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER
OFFICERS CONSULTED:			
TITLE OF REPORT:	SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PLAN		
APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A:	DRAFT FORWARD WORK PLAN	

Purpose of Report

1. To request that Members consider and approve the DRAFT Forward Work Plan (FwP) for the Authority's Scrutiny Committee (attached at Appendix A); and consider involving partners/ key stakeholders in some scrutiny reviews.

Recommendation

2. That Members;
 - a. Consider the DRAFT FwP for the Authority's Scrutiny Committee (attached at Appendix A).
 - b. Approve the reversion to generic Scrutiny Committee meetings, rather than remit focused meetings.
 - c. Consider the appropriateness of involving partners/ key stakeholders in some scrutiny reviews (as indicated on the DRAFT FwP), to provide assurance regarding the effectiveness of joint working arrangements.

Introduction and Background

3. In 2018, a review was undertaken of the Authority's Scrutiny arrangements. As part of this review, consultation was undertaken with a range of stakeholders, who were asked to make suggestions as to how they felt scrutiny arrangements could be improved moving forward.
4. Some of the suggested improvements included:

- Re-introducing a FwP for any committee with responsibility for scrutiny, devised by Members, and containing scrutiny items linked to the IRMP or the Authority's Mission and Aims.
 - The creation of more structured scrutiny, driven by Members.
 - Amending the MFRA Committee Structure and meeting timetable, to create a more structured, regular meeting schedule, to support improved scrutiny.
 - Consideration of the involvement of partners/ key stakeholders in any scrutiny process, to ensure the effectiveness of joint working arrangements.
5. At the AGM in June 2018, Members approved the establishment of a distinct "Scrutiny Committee"; and 4 Lead Member Roles, for "People", "Operational Response", "Operational Preparedness"; and "Community Risk Management".
 6. It was agreed that the Scrutiny Committee consist of 9 Members, including the 4 Lead Members; and that it would meet 4 times per year, with each meeting focusing on a specific Lead Member remit.
 7. At the first meeting for each remit, Members of the Committee were provided with a presentation, focusing on a key area within the respective Directorate. This enabled Members to ask questions and identify areas for further scrutiny, including an area around which to undertake a "Rapid Review".
 8. In addition to the 4 scheduled meetings of the Scrutiny Committee, additional meetings of the Committee have also taken place to undertake these "Rapid Reviews".
 9. From these meetings, several ideas for scrutiny reviews were identified; and these have been incorporated into a DRAFT FwP, which is attached as Appendix A.
 10. At the AGM in June 2019, Members approved a reduction in the number of "Lead Member" Roles from 4 to 2. Rather than having a specific remit, it was agreed that these remaining 2 roles, become generic "Lead Scrutiny" roles, with each Lead Scrutiny Member being a Co-Chair of the Scrutiny Committee; and Rapid Review Panels, on a rotational basis.
 11. Due to these changes; and as a DRAFT FwP has now been devised, it is proposed that meetings of the Scrutiny Committee, revert back to being generic meetings, rather than remit focused, to enable a more efficient and effective flow of business throughout the year.
 12. It is intended that specific Scrutiny "Rapid Reviews" continue to take place throughout the year; and these are captured within the DRAFT FwP.

13. The DRAFT FwP also identifies how each item for scrutiny links to the Authority's IRMP, or its Mission and Aims, the proposed format for undertaking each review; and the proposed timescales/ dates for reporting back to Members.
14. Also, several items contained within the DRAFT FwP, are around how MFRA work with its partners on a range of activity. Members are therefore asked to consider the appropriateness of involving representatives of some of those partners, in the scrutiny reviews, to provide assurance on the effectiveness of joint working arrangements.

Equality and Diversity Implications

15. There are no direct equality and diversity implications arising from this report.
16. Any specific equality and diversity implications, will be fully considered throughout the scrutiny reviews.

Staff Implications

17. Creating a structured FwP for the Scrutiny Committee, will ensure that Officer and Member time is used to best effect, in a manner which will add value and ensure greater accountability.
18. Providing due consideration to the reporting timescales within the FwP, will also ensure that Officers have sufficient opportunity to prepare for the scrutiny reviews.

Legal Implications

19. Although fire and rescue authorities are not required by law to establish specific scrutiny committees, the new Fire and Rescue National Framework, which came into effect in April 2018, states that FRA's must be accountable to communities for the service they provide; and

"In demonstrating their accountability to communities for the service they provide, FRA's need to: have scrutiny arrangements in place that reflect the high standard communities expect for an important public safety service".

20. Creating a FwP for the Scrutiny Committee, that is publically available, will ensure that the Authority is fulfilling this requirement.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

21. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

22. Any specific financial implications, will be fully considered throughout the scrutiny reviews.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

23. There are no direct risk management, health and safety or environment implications arising from this report. However, having robust, effective scrutiny arrangements in place, will ensure that the Authority is best placed to identify any potential implications should they arise.
24. Any specific risk management, health and safety, or environmental implications, will be fully considered throughout the scrutiny reviews.

Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

25. Having a structured Forward Work Plan for Scrutiny, will enable MFRA to assure itself that it continues to deliver against its Mission – *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*, its aims; and it's IRMP Objectives.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

GLOSSARY OF TERMS
