



MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE held on 24 NOVEMBER 2010 at MEETING ROOM 3, FSHQ at 10:00.

PRESENT: Councillors B Livesley, C Thorley, K Musgrave, B Crowe, M Biggin and H Mundry

Independent Members: Mr W Ravenscroft (in the chair), Mr R Garner and Mr M McBride

PART 1 – MATTERS CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

B DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of Members' interests.

C MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That

[1] the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 29 September 2010, be confirmed as a correct record.

ITEMS REQUIRING DISCUSSION / DECISION

**2 CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE 2007 ACTION PLAN SUMMARY
PROGRESS REPORT – THEMES 1- 3**

The Director of Finance and Corporate Planning presented Members with a summary of progress against the identified actions following the adoption of the Code of Corporate Governance 2007.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the progress on core principles 1 - 3 of the 2007 Code of Corporate Governance action plan be noted.

3 REGISTER OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The Monitoring Officer presented Members with a report on the Register of Members' Interests. The report provided Members with an opportunity to review the Members Register of Interests form and also consider the publication of the register on the Service's website.

Members discussed the publication of information on the internet which raised some concerns, in particular the risks associated with the publication of details of the addresses of those Members that hold certain positions e.g. Justice of the Peace. The Monitoring Officer advised that there was an exemption that might be engaged. Furthermore it was noted that each Member would be contacted prior to the publication of the Register.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the existing Members Register of Interests form be retained until further guidance is issued; and
- [2] in principle there was agreement that the Register of Members' Interests should be published on the internet provided that individual concerns are considered and exemptions applied where appropriate.

4 REVIEW OF PROTOCOL ON GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY FOR MEMBERS

The Monitoring Officer presented a report providing Members with an opportunity to review the Protocol on Gifts and Hospitality for Members. The Protocol had previously been considered in November 2009. Members were informed that the Protocol was similar to others utilised by other public bodies and appeared fit for purpose. It was noted that the Protocol on Gifts and Hospitality should publicised as a reminder to Members and Officers.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the Protocol on Gifts and Hospitality for Members be continued in its current form.

5 REVIEW OF DISPENSATIONS PROCEDURE

The Monitoring Officer presented Members with a report on the review of Dispensation Procedures. The report provided Members with an opportunity to review the procedure for handling applications for dispensations including the application form. The Committee was reminded that the Procedure had been agreed in November 2009. The Monitoring Officer advised Members that the legal position had not changed and no applications had been considered since the Procedure was adopted.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the existing procedure for handling dispensations be continued pending any changes to the law and/or guidance relating to Members' Interests.

6 REVIEW OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Monitoring Officer presented Members with a report on the review of the Committee's Terms of Reference. Members were reminded that the Terms of Reference for the Standards Committee were approved by the Fire Authority.

The Monitoring Officer advised that the Standards Committee's Terms of Reference appeared to be more comprehensive than other examples in operation elsewhere. However, it was felt that they could be improved. Three changes were considered.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the existing Terms of Reference be retained subject to the following additions / amendments:
- (i) an additional function, "determining questions relating to the designation of politically restricted posts";
 - (ii) an additional function, "commenting upon the Authority's Constitution from an ethical viewpoint"; and
 - (iii) an amendment to Article 6 at 6.13 (n) by the addition of the following words to the end of the sub-paragraph, "e.g. the use of Access to Information provisions to exempt the publication of reports".