



**MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE held on 27 January 2010 at Lecture Theatre, FSHQ at 10:00.**

**PRESENT:** Councillors M Biggin, B Livesley 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**

The Chair welcomed the newly appointed Independent Member to the Committee.

It was also noted that the Deputy Monitoring Officer was leaving the Service and this would be the last meeting of the Standards Committee that she would attend. Members gave thanks for the work done and congratulated the Deputy Monitoring Officer on the new position and wished her every success for the future.

**A APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors K Musgrave and C Thorley.

**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 25 November 2009, be confirmed as a correct record.

**MAJOR ITEMS REQUIRING DISCUSSION / DECISION**

**2 ETHICAL ROAD-SHOW PLAN**

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented Members with a paper on the proposed planning for the Ethical "Roadshow" as outlined in the forward work plan approved by Members in September 2009.

The paper provided details on a number of suggestions that the Standards Committee could become involved to promote its work. It was noted that the roadshows would commence in June following the elections to avoid the 'Purdah' Period.

Members discussed the options presented within the report. It was agreed that attendance at major Cheshire events to create awareness of the operations of the Service in terms of the Authority and its Committees would be useful and enable the information to reach the public in large numbers. There would also be the opportunity to distribute leaflets that highlighted the key points of the Authority and its role.

It was felt that there needed to be a standard set of core points/key messages that Members presented when attending events, this would ensure the consistency of the message that was being portrayed. It was agreed that a standard statement should be produced for Members.

Members discussed the publication of the role of the Standards Committee in the Services internal Magazine – the Alert. It was agreed that a brief note should be placed in the magazine prior to the elections giving an overview of the Authority and its role. It was suggested that the role of elected Members, independent members and the Monitoring Officer needed to be clearly highlighted. Furthermore it was noted that the elections would be an opportunity to present further information highlighting change and making clear the roles of the elected members and their political parties.

The Members agreed that the Annual Report should make particular reference to the Standards Committee and make reference to the Standards Committees Annual Report

**RESOLVED: That**

- [1] the plans for the Roadshow be approved; and
- [2] the article provided as Annex 2 together with the additional information noted below be approved:
  - (i) clear information on the role of the Monitoring Officer; and
  - (ii) where the Standards complaints forms can be found.

**3 BULLETIN 46, DECEMBER 2009, FROM STANDARDS FOR ENGLAND**

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented Members with a paper that outlined some of the relevant issues raised in Bulletin 46 from Standards for England, received in late December 2009. The issues outlined within the paper were specific to Fire Authorities.

Members had a lengthy discussion on the issue of predetermination. It was agreed that this would primarily apply to those Members presenting a

regulatory function. Examples of situations where predetermination would become an issue in the Fire Authority were considered however it was felt that Members were required to apply their role dependant on the committee/meeting they were attending.

It was highlighted that such topics would be covered through the Members Training and Development Programme.

**RESOLVED: That**

[1] the issued raised in the paper from the Standards for England 46 be noted.

**3 REVISED CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE – THEMES 1-3**

The Director of Finance and Corporate Planning presented Members with the Revised Code of Corporate Governance themes 1-3. The key areas were highlighted to Members and details of further information provided.

Members questioned the consultation methods of the Service and they were advised by the Director of Finance and Corporate Planning that feedback received from the public was positive. In a lot of cases there was a lack of attendance at consultation events despite the publicity and advertising of them. Members suggested that consultation events should also be held in sixth forms and colleges. This would open up a more challenging debate with the younger people within the area.

**RESOLVED: That**

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