



MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE held on 30 June 2010 at Lecture Theatre, FSHQ at 10:00.

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

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS: Mr W Ravenscroft (in the chair), and Mr M McBride

PART 1 – MATTERS CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A Chair and Committee Membership for 2010-11

Members were asked to note the membership of the Committee for 2010-11, as agreed by the Fire Authority at their Annual General Meeting on 2 June 2010 and listed below:

Mr W Ravenscroft - Chair
Councillor M Biggin
Councillor B Crowe
Councillor B Livesley
Councillor H Mundry
Councillor K Musgrave
Councillor C Thorley
Mr R Garner Independent Member
Mr M McBride Independent Member

B APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Biggin and Independent Member Mr R Garner

C DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of Members' interests

D MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That

[1] the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 31 March 2010, be confirmed as a correct record.

ITEMS REQUIRING DISCUSSION / DECISION

- 2 Before continuing with the agenda the Monitoring Officer provided Members with an update on the position of Standards for England following the publication of the Coalition Government's Manifesto. The Monitoring Officer advised Members that one of the objectives in the document was to abolish Standards for England. As a consequence of this the Annual Assembly had been cancelled and the submission of the quarterly returns had been suspended. Standards for England were currently awaiting further guidance from Central Government.

The Monitoring Officer highlighted that the Legislation and the Code of Conduct were still in place to ensure the continued good standard of conduct in Local Authorities.

Members were advised that the new Monitoring Officer was expected to start on 26 July 2010 and would keep Members updated with further developments.

3 STANDARDS COMMITTEE – DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2009-10

The Monitoring Officer presented Members with the Draft Standards Committee Annual Report. The Local Standards Framework was introduced on 8 May 2008, when all Local Authority Standards Committees became responsible for receiving and assessing complaints about elected Members. Members were advised that the Standards Committee was required to complete an annual return to the Standards Board which provided information on the number of complaints received and assessed and also general information on the work of the Standards Committee.

Members were reminded that the draft Annual Return was approved at the last meeting of the Standards Committee where Members discussed the production of the Annual Report to promote the work of the Committee.

Members confirmed that they were satisfied with the work programme for the coming year. However, it was felt that items for completion should not be specified as on going but rather an extended target date be given.

Members discussed the Annual Report in view of the current position of Standards for England. It was felt that the report should still be published and presented to the Fire Authority in order to highlight the work of the Standards Committee. Members agreed that the Chair of the Committee would attend the Fire Authority Meeting to present the paper.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the Draft Annual Report be approved; and
- [2] the Standards Committee Annual Report be presented to the meeting of the Fire Authority taking place on 15 September 2010.

4 COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS 2009-10

The Democratic Services Manager presented Members with the Annual Compliments and Complaints for 2009-10. Members were informed that the statistics relating to complaints and compliments made to the Authority were reported to the Standards Committee on an annual basis.

At the last meeting of the Standards Committee Members approved the revised Compliments, Complaints and Comments (CCC) procedure. The new procedure included a revised method of recording CCC's to allow a more in-depth analysis of the types of CCC's received and the areas of the service they aligned to.

Members were advised that the reporting period for CCC's had been re-aligned to link to the reporting periods for other Service data such as financial and performance data reporting which covered the period from 1 April to 31 March each year. This would also allow the Service to produce a more timely report for Standards Committee in July each year. Furthermore the comparative data had been re-calculated to cover 1 April to 31 March each year from 2006-07.

Members noted that during the period April 2009 – March 2010 the Service received 48 Compliments, 17 Comments/Informal Complaints and 24 Complaints.

Members discussed the report and its contents. It was felt that the compliments recorded the work of the Service.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the report be noted.

5 2007 REVISED CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE – SUMMARY PROGRESS REPORT – THEMES 1-3

The Director of Finance and Corporate Planning presented Members with the revised Code of Corporate Governance – core principles 1-3. This Corporate Governance report ensured that Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service conducted its business in the right way and in a timely, accountable manner.

Members discussed the Member Training needs. It was advised that the personal development reviews being conducted could be aligned to those completed at the constituent Authorities however, Members would need to agree to release their personal training records to the Fire Authority.

RESOLVED: That

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

6 SUMMARY OF MEMBER ATTENDANCE – APRIL 2009 TO MAY 2010

The Monitoring Officer presented Members with the summary of Members attendance April 2009 to May 2010. Members were reminded that monitoring the attendance of the Policy, Standards and Performance and Overview Committees fell within the remit of the Standards Committee. The information was reported to the Committee annually and would usually run from June to May to link in with the Fire Authority's municipal year. For 2009-10 the summary covered the period from April 2009 to May 2010 to reflect the amendments made to the meeting timetable for 2009-10 to accommodate the changes brought about by the re-organisation of Councils in Cheshire.

Members discussed the Members attendance summary attached to the report and it was noted that the figures covered only the principal Committees of the Authority. The Standards Committee recognised and noted that Members attend many other events in the discharge of their roles on behalf of the Authority and felt that this needed to be factored into a consideration of a Members engagement with the work of the Authority.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the summary of Members attendance at meetings of the Authority and its three main Committees be noted.