



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE held on 9 July 2008
at Fire Service Headquarters, Winsford**

PRESENT: Cllrs B Jones, R Fletcher, D Freear, M Biggin and H Mundry.

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS: Mr W Ravenscroft (in the Chair) and Mr R Garner

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair wished to remember Cllr Bert Grange, who sadly passed away on 12 June. His continual loyalty and commitment to the Fire Authority before and throughout his illness was acknowledged by the Members and he would be greatly missed.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the re-election of the independent Member, Mr W Ravenscroft, as the Chair of the Committee until 31 March 2009, in accordance with the requirements of the new Member Code of Conduct, be noted;
- [2] the Membership of the Committee to serve until 31 March 2009, as agreed by the Fire Authority at their annual general meeting (AGM) on 11 June 2008 as listed below:

Mr W Ravenscroft - Chair

B Jones
H Mundry
D Freear
Conservative vacancies
M Biggin

Mr R Garner – Independent Member

- [3] Members were informed that a number of applications to sit as Independent Members had been received and those short-listed candidates would be invited to the next meeting of the committee on 10 September 2008 for interview; and
- [4] the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 2 April 2008 be confirmed as a correct record.

2 COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS ANNUAL RETURN

The Corporate and Democratic Support Manager presented a report to Members which set out the figures relating to complaints and compliments made to the Authority during 2007. Members noted that these were reported to the Standards Committee on an annual basis.

The report highlighted that although there had been an increase in complaints from the previous year, there had also been a rise in compliments recorded, particularly with regard to the Service's wider community involvement. The Corporate and Democratic Support Manager informed the Members of the proposed enhancements to both the internal and external complaints system, in relation to feedback mechanisms.

Members raised a number of issues particularly with regard to feedback from each complaint and requested that in future this additional information be added to the report. The Chair noted that there were a modest number of complaints in light of the many activities the Service was involved with.

RESOLVED:

That the information regarding complaints and compliments received for the calendar year 2007 be noted.

3 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

The Head of Finance and Governance presented a report which set out progress against the Core Principles 1-3 of the Corporate Governance Action Plan. Members noted Principles 4-6 would be presented at the next meeting of the Standards Committee on 10 September 2008. The report provided a summary of progress of identified actions, following the adoption of the revised code of Corporate Governance 2007. The format of the information provided was agreed by Members of the Standards Committee at their meeting on 23 January 2008.

Members were pleased with progress made to date and raised a number of issues particularly with regard to their involvement in recruitment in community support for the Response Panel, which engaged with and collected the views of Cheshire residents.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Corporate Services confirmed the need to train new managers. This was made more relevant as uniformed Managers retired from the Service, and the need for greater awareness of the governance aspects of officer roles.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the report be received; and
- [2] the summary action plan, with progress included be reviewed to ensure delivery towards compliance.

5 URGENT BUSINESS AND EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

(1) Urgent Business

RESOLVED:

There were no items considered under urgent business.