



MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE held on 29 JUNE 2011 in the Lecture Theatre, FSHQ at 10:00 am.

PRESENT: Councillors M Biggin, D Brickhill, J Leather and B Rudd

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 CHAIR AND MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEE 2011/12

The Members were asked to note the membership of the Committee for 2011/12, as agreed by the Fire Authority at its annual general meeting on 8 June 2011 and listed below:

Independent Members:	Councillors:
Mr W Ravenscroft – Chair	M Biggin
Mr R Garner	D Brickhill
Mr M McBride	B Crowe
	J Leather
	H Mundry
	B Rudd

B APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H Mundry and B Crowe.

C DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of Members' interests.

D MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That

the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 30 March 2011, 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 in respect of themes 1-3 following the adoption of the Code of Corporate Governance 2007.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Planning included an introduction to the background of the Code of Governance 2007 for new Members' information, and noted the existing action plan was nearly completed. The Service would be seeking to refresh its benchmark against core principles to reflect a modern 2011 organisation. Officers would carry out an exercise to review the Code of Governance core principles by the end of 2011 and then submit the revised document to the Standards Committee.

Members discussed the Listening to Our Customers project, regarding co-ordinating the feedback received from incidents where other emergency services attended. The Director of Finance and Corporate Planning would discuss this further with the Head of Communications.

Members discussed Value for Money reviews and the wider benefits of comparing performance with other Fire & Rescue Services, and what the view of the Audit Commission would be regarding this approach. The Director of Finance and Corporate Planning explained that the Audit Commission were no longer resourced to fulfil the role of assessing performance and it was incumbent on the sector to compare and benchmark with other Fire Authorities. The Service was exploring how it could benchmark with other Fire Authorities going forward. Currently the Authority used Family Group 4, which provided benchmarking with a group of Fire Services across the country with similar characteristics.

RESOLVED: That

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

3 COMPLIMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND COMMENTS – ANNUAL REPORT 2010 - 2011

The Monitoring Officer presented Members with a report which provided statistics related to Compliments, Complaints and Comments received by the Authority for the period 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011.

The Monitoring Officer explained that the report provided a summary of each complaint received, and that the majority of complaints were dealt with informally at initial contact. The Service responded to complaints received in a timely manner, and in most cases to a satisfactory conclusion, which avoided the complaint being escalated formally.

Members discussed the timescale for closing records, if no further correspondence was received, which the Standards Committee had previously recommended. Members stated the process appeared to work well.

The Monitoring Officer explained a number of compliments had been received, which had not been reported in detail. Members commented that it would be useful to include a summary of the compliments received in future reports to provide a balanced view.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the information regarding Compliments, Complaints and Comments received for the period 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011 be noted.

4 SUMMARY OF MEMBER ATTENDANCE JUNE 2010 – MAY 2011

The Monitoring Officer presented Members with a report which summarised Members attendance at meetings of the Fire Authority for the period June 2010 – May 2011. The other three main Committees, Policy, Standards and Performance and Overview Committees were included in the remit.

The Monitoring Officer explained that a level of 70% attendance had been agreed as an acceptable level of attendance at a past meeting of the Standards Committee, and this level had been achieved.

Members considered whether it was appropriate to mark a member as 'absent' when a good reason was proffered for non-attendance. However, there was no formal proposal to this effect. It was noted that the Standards Committee would investigate any low attendance levels identified, taking into account reasons for absence.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the summary of Member attendance at meetings of the Authority and its three main Committees for the year 2010 - 2011 be noted.