

## CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

**MEETING OF** : **STANDARDS COMMITTEE** **ITEM: 2**  
**DATE** : **28<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2012**  
**REPORT OF** : **HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**  
**AUTHOR** : **ANDREW LEADBETTER**

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**SUBJECT:** **NEW STANDARDS REGIME**

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### Summary

1. This report is intended to progress the work required to introduce a new standards regime at the Authority's meeting in June 2012. Members are asked to provide views about various issues.

### Recommended:

**[1] Members are asked to consider the issues contained and referred to in the report and provide guidance to officers.**

### Background

2. At the last meeting of this Committee Members received a report and briefing about the implications flowing from the provisions in the Localism Act 2011 concerned with standards. At that time information was awaited (in the form of Regulations and a model code of conduct) before progress could be made.

### Information

3. The Government has not issued the Regulations that are required to complete the Members' Code of Conduct. This is disappointing given the timescale to finalise the new regime. However, useful discussions continue locally, e.g. at Cheshire Secretaries (the meeting of senior legal advisers for the constituent authorities and police and fire).
4. The Appendix to the report works through a range of issues, begging various questions in what is hoped is a logical order. Members input will provide officers with the guidance necessary to progress matters as far as possible pending the Regulations that are awaited.

5. The intention is to provide a report/session to Members of the Fire Authority at, or after, its meeting in April, to ensure that they are sufficiently informed prior to being asked to adopt the new standards regime at the Fire Authority meeting in June.

### **Financial Implications**

6. The financial implications arising from changes to the standards regime should be capable of being managed within existing budgets. However, the handling of standards issues internally, rather than through the existing standards machinery, could have financial implications (albeit no previous cases have occurred). The main concerns may be: the one-off impact on officer time should there be allegations that require investigation; and for the more involved matters which need external input (which has commonly been the case in local authorities) there could be unplanned expenditure.

### **Legal Implications**

7. The report covers these in as much depth as is possible at this time.

### **Equality and Diversity and Environmental Implications**

8. There are no implications from decisions arising from this report. These issues may need to be further considered as the standards agenda progresses.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS:**