



AGENDA ITEM: 15

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

17 March 2014

THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT TO THE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Report by Colin Everett, Clerk to the Authority

Purpose of Report

- 1 Members are asked to note and approve the attached report.

Background

- 2 As a matter of good corporate governance the Standards Committee provides the Fire and Rescue Authority with an annual report on its activities during each financial year.
- 3 Consequently the Committee's tenth annual report is attached for Members' consideration.

Recommendation

- 4 Members are asked to note and approve the Standards Committee's Annual Report.



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE OF NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Background

This is the Standards Committee's tenth annual report to the Fire and Rescue Authority and spans the period from April 2013 to March 2014. Legislation requires that Standards Committees meet at least annually.

The Terms of Reference of the Standards Committee provide a remit to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members of the Authority and to oversee the whistle-blowing policy for complaints against members of the Authority. Also, where statute permits, to receive reports and complaints about members and to conduct or oversee investigations and to make recommendations to the authority.

Membership

Jane Eyton-Jones and Celia Blomeley's terms of office on the Standards Committee came to an end on 31 December 2013. Following the introduction of the Standards Committees (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006, an independent member can be reappointed for a maximum of one further term of up to four years. There is no legal requirement to advertise a vacancy if it is intended to make a reappointment.

Both ladies indicated that they were willing to be reappointed and at the Authority meeting on 16 December 2013, Members agreed to the reappointments.

Therefore, the current membership is as follows:

Independent members

Celia Blomeley 01/01/2014 - 31/12/17

Jane A Eyton-Jones 01/01/2014 - 31/12/17

David Morris 01/09/10 - 31/08/14

Antony P Young 01/04/12 - 30/03/16

Fire and Rescue Authority members

Councillor Brian Dunn (18/06/12 onwards)

Councillor Jim G Evans (18/06/12 onwards)

Also contained within the report to the Authority, was a request for delegated authority to the Chair, Clerk and the Chief Fire Officer to appoint a lay panel member to sit on any future advisory panels when vacancies arise on the Standards Committee. Authority members agreed that the appointment of the lay panel member should be delegated to the Chair, Clerk and the Chief Fire Officer.

Attendance and Issues

The Standards Committee met on 10th July 2013 and the following members attended:

Jane A Eyton-Jones (Chair)
David Morris (Deputy Chair)
Celia Blomeley
Antony P Young
Cllr Jim Evans, Anglesey County Council

At that meeting, Jane A Eyton-Jones was re-appointed Chair and David Morris was appointed Deputy Chair of the Committee. Members discussed the proposed changes to the code of conduct, indemnity insurance, local resolution system and the publication of members' interests online. Members also noted that the Authority had approved a social media protocol.

Another meeting was held on 29th January 2014 and the following members were in attendance:

David Morris (Deputy Chair)
Celia Blomeley
Antony P Young
Cllr Brian Dunn, Flintshire County Council

At that meeting, members discussed the following documents that were submitted for their consideration:

- Member/officer relations protocol
- Local resolution system procedure
- Indemnity insurance.

The Deputy Clerk provided detailed information as to the purpose of introducing these policies and procedures and having scrutinised various alternatives to the documents presented, members decided to recommend the documents to the Executive Panel for consideration at its meeting on 3 February. At that meeting, it was agreed to recommend all three documents to the full Authority on 17 March 2014 for adoption. In addition, members were also given an update on the publication of members' interests online and the proposed changes to the code of conduct.

Complaints against members of the Fire and Rescue Authority

During the period of this report, no complaints have been made against councillors in roles as members of the Fire and Rescue Authority. Accordingly, no matters have been referred to the Committee for investigation or decision.

Financial Implications

The budget for the Standards Committee is part of the committee services heading which covers all Authority costs. Following the approval of the members' remuneration scheme on 18th June 2012, independent members are now entitled to claim remuneration based on meetings and events attended. To date, no such claims have been made. Travel allowances amounting to £50.90 have been paid to independent members.

Conclusion

The Standards Committee recommends that the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority notes its report.