

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Standards Committee

18th June 2010

Contribution to Annual Governance Statement

Report of the Clerk to the Authority

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1 Summary

The Authority's Annual Governance Statement for the year 2009-10 is currently in preparation. This report proposes that the Committee make comments for inclusion in the Annual Governance Statement to reflect the contribution made by the Committee to the good governance of the Authority.

2 Purpose of the Annual Governance Statement

- 2.1 The Annual Governance Statement summarises the Authority's corporate governance arrangements. It is produced to satisfy accounting and audit regulations and is prepared using guidance issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). After consideration and approval by Members of the Authority, the Statement must be signed by the Chairman of the Authority and the Chief Officer. It forms part of the annual Statement of Accounts.
- 2.2 The Annual Governance Statement involves self-assessment against the six core principles of good governance. The Statement prepared last year, covering 2008-09, is attached as an appendix. Members will note that self-assessment requires consideration of a number of matters that fall within the remit of Standards Committee (see in particular paragraphs 2.2.2 and 2.3.1 – 2.3.3).

3 Production of this Year's Annual Governance Statement

- 3.1 This year's Annual Governance Statement is currently in the course of preparation, and will be presented to Governance Committee later this month as part of the process of finalisation of the Authority's Statement of Accounts.
- 3.2 The Clerk has suggested that, this year, the Standards Committee have the opportunity to contribute to the Annual Governance Statement, so that the work of the Committee over the 2009-10 year to promote and maintain high standards of conduct within the Authority is acknowledged.
- 3.3 The format of the Annual Governance Statement will be the same as that of last year, involving self-assessment against the six core principles. Members are therefore invited to consider the comments that could be offered for inclusion in this year's Annual Governance Statement. Some suggestions are:

- 3.3.1 Members of the Committee have been trained in the procedures for assessment and review of complaints under the Members' Code of Conduct.
- 3.3.2 The Committee has been briefed on developments in the ethical standards regime, and considered findings from research on the impact of local handling of complaints.
- 3.3.3 The Committee has arranged for the Clerk to deliver update training for all Members of the Authority on developments in the Code of Conduct.
- 3.3.4 The Committee has reviewed and refreshed the process for recruitment of independent members to the Committee. Independent Members assist in promoting public confidence in the work of the Standards Committee and in ensuring impartiality. They add value to the Committee's work by bringing additional experience to bear in the Committee's deliberations. The Committee has agreed a person specification and statement of requirements of the role that reflect modern needs.
- 3.3.5 New independent members have been recruited to the Committee, in accordance with the updated process, following public advertisement.
- 3.4 Members may wish to make other relevant suggestions for inclusion.

4 **Conclusion**

- 4.1 The Annual Governance Statement provides an opportunity to reflect the contribution made by the Committee to the good governance of the Authority.

5 **Recommendation**

- 5.1 That Members consider and suggest comments to reflect the contribution of the Committee towards the overall good governance of the Authority in the 2009-10 year.
- 5.2 That the Clerk be authorised to draft a suitable contribution to the Annual Governance Statement reflecting the Committee's comments.

Background Papers:

None