

AT A MEETING of the HAMPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
STANDARDS COMMITTEE held at The Castle, Winchester on 18 June, 2010

PRESENT:

Mr. M. James (Independent Member – Chairman); C. Carter; Mrs. J. Frankum; D. Harrison; R.J. Kimber.

Other Independent members: Mr. R. Farrall and Mr. F.H.M. Quick.

16 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Fraser and F. Jonas.

17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that, where they believed that they had a personal or personal prejudicial interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting, they should, normally at the time of the debate, declare their interest and, having regard to the circumstances described in Paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 12 of the Fire Authority's Code of Conduct, consider whether to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with paragraph 12 of the Code.

18 DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations.

19 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 December, 2009 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising:

Review of Current Committee Structure and Decision Making Arrangements

On Minute 14, the Clerk reported that the Authority on 9 June, 2010 had approved the proposed changes to the terms of reference of its Committees. The option to amalgamate the Governance and Standards Committees had not been supported.

Appointment of new Independent Members on Standards Committee

On Minute 15, the Clerk highlighted those comments made by the Governance Committee at their recent meeting in relation to the role of the 3 Independent Members of the Standards Committee. It had been suggested that the two new independent members should be given the opportunity to attend and observe, if they so wish, some future meetings of the Authority and its Committees. Both

Mr. Farrall and Mr. Quick welcomed this opportunity and agreed to attend in the first instance the Governance Committee on 29 June, 2010.

20 **APPOINTMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT VICE-CHAIRMAN**

The Committee were reminded that they had been invited by the Authority to fill the vacant Vice-Chairman position from one of the newly appointed Independent Members, namely Mr. R. Farrall and Mr. F.H.M. Quick.

The two independent members both indicated their wish to be considered for this role and briefly left the meeting.

The Committee invited them back individually to make a short presentation to Members on their suitability for the role of Vice-Chairman .

On hearing the presentations and after careful consideration, Members unanimously agreed to appoint Mr. F.H.M. Quick as Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED:

That Mr. F.H.M. Quick be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee.

21 **CONTRIBUTION TO ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

The Committee considered the report of the Clerk (Item 6 in the Minute Book) inviting Members to make any comments for inclusion in the Annual Governance Statement to reflect the contribution made by the Committee to the good governance of the Authority. After a full discussion, the Clerk was invited to include the Members' comments made at the meeting in the Authority's Annual Governance Statement for 2009/10 which was currently being prepared.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be authorised to draft a suitable contribution to the Annual Governance Statement 2009/10 reflecting Members' comments made at the meeting in relation to those initiatives undertaken in 2009/10 to promote and maintain high standards of conduct.

[Note: After consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee, the Clerk has submitted the following comments for inclusion]:-

- Members of the Committee have been trained in the procedures for assessment and review of complaints under the Members' Code of Conduct.
- 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

- The Committee has arranged for the Clerk to deliver update training for all Members of the Authority on developments in the Code of Conduct
- 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.
- New independent members have been recruited to the Committee in accordance with the updated process, following public advertisement
- The Committee has enquired as to the arrangements for whistle blowing within the Authority and ensured itself that these are effective.
- The Committee has confirmed its view that, in 2009/10, an overall high standard of ethical conduct has been maintained within the Authority.

22 **UPDATE ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS**

The Committee received the report of the Clerk (Item 7 in the Minute Book) summarising some of the recent developments in matters relevant to the Committee's remit. Members discussed the intention to abolish the Standards Board regime and welcomed the undertaking of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to work with the Clerk in contacting the Local Government Association at the appropriate time regarding any representations they make about what succeeds the existing arrangements.

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