



ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY'S STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING

Held on Tuesday 15 May 2007

Strategic Command Centre, Headquarters, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Dee Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 4FS



Independent Members present: Mr Albert Gregory
Mr Peter McGuigan
Mr Ronald Webb

In attendance: Lynda Kenyon (Committee Manager)
Rosemary Lansdowne (Clerk and Monitoring Officer)

Action

03.01.07 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Andrew Bradley (Fire Authority Member), Councillor Peter Jones (Fire Authority Member) and Mr John Quinton (Independent Member).

03.02.07 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Having been reminded that in accordance with the Fire Authority's Code of Conduct, Members are required to declare interests which are Personal or Personal and Prejudicial, where appropriate, it was **Noted** that on this occasion there were no such declarations made.

03.03.07 PART I MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 APRIL 2007

The Part I Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 4 April 2007 were **Agreed** as a correct record for signing by the Chairman.

03.04.07 NEW CODE OF CONDUCT FOR FIRE AUTHORITY MEMBERS

The views of the Standards Committee were sought on the New Model Code of Conduct for Members, and the Clerk and Monitoring Officer (CMO) asked the Committee to consider if any additional clauses should be added to the Model Code before it is formally adopted by the Fire Authority.

Mr Peter McGuigan informed the Committee that the Policy Advisers at the Standards Board for England had advised that the references to paragraphs 11 and 12(2) of The Model Code of Conduct, as referred to in paragraph 2(5) of the definitions, were a drafting error and could apply to Fire Authorities should they wish to adopt it.

The **Standards Committee:**

- **Recommended** to the Fire Authority that paragraph 6(c) should not be adopted.



- **Recommended** to the Fire Authority that paragraphs 11 and 12(2) should be adopted.
- **Recommended** to the Fire Authority that the new Model Code of Conduct be adopted without any additional clauses, at its meeting on 27 June 2006, subject to the above recommendations.

CMO

03.05.07 ANNUAL REPORT TO FIRE AUTHORITY

The Standards Committee **Agreed** that their annual report to the Fire Authority should comprise the following reporting:

- Confirmation of Committee membership.
- Number of meetings held since the Fire Authority meeting on 28 June 2006, one of which had considered a matter brought to their attention regarding a possible breach of the Code of Conduct, and the respective advice given.
- The Committee had considered the Register of Interests (*considered later in the meeting at item 03.06.07*), and would wish to remind Members that the Fire Authority's Code of Conduct requires Members to register their Declarations of Interest within 28 days of appointment to office and to, within 28 days of becoming aware of any changes to their Interests, provide written notification to the Clerk and Monitoring Officer. The Committee had noted that, as at 15 May 2007, there were still 6 Members who had not completed their Declaration of Interests which was a breach of the Code of Conduct.
- The Committee had considered the Hospitality Register (*considered later in the meeting at item 03.06.07*) and would wish to remind staff of the need to declare any receipt of hospitality.
- The Committee would continue to monitor aspects of the Fire Authority, including the Registers of Interests and Hospitality, and the attendance by Members at meetings of the Fire Authority.
- That a representative Independent Member would attend at least 2 meetings per annum of the Fire Authority.

Consideration was given to Members' attendance at meetings of the Fire Authority and its Committees, and the Standards Committee:

- **Agreed** to draw to the attention of the Chairman of the Fire Authority the Members' attendance since the annual meeting of the Fire Authority in 2006.
- **Noted** that non-attendance by some Members effected Unitary Member representation, and **Agreed** that Unitary Member representation should also be included within the general attendance data presented, and drawn to the attention of the Fire Authority Chairman, and that a summary be included within the Standards Committee Annual report to the Fire Authority.

CMO /
Chairman

CMO



The Clerk and Monitoring Officer agreed to prepare the Standards Committee's annual report on behalf of the Standards Committee and forward a draft copy to the Chairman for his approval.

CMO
Fire Authority
Agenda
27.06.07

03.06.07 REGISTER OF INTERESTS

a) Declaration of Acceptance of Office Book

The Standards Committee examined the Declaration of Acceptance of Office Book. The Clerk and Monitoring Officer confirmed that Fire Authority Members were asked to sign their respective Declaration of Acceptance of Office, which included compliance with the Fire Authority's Code of Conduct, at the Fire Authority's annual meeting. The Clerk and Monitoring Officer noted that this was not a statutory requirement of the Fire Authority, however it was deemed to be good practice. The Standards Committee **Supported** this.

b) Register of Interests

The Standards Committee examined the Register of Interests. The Clerk and Monitoring Officer confirmed that newly appointed Fire Authority Members were required to make a Declaration of their Interests and that this was done by the completion of a form entitled 'Notification by Member of a Local Authority of Financial and Other Interests'. She stated that a supplementary form had been circulated to Members on 19 March 2007 to enable them to update their respective Declaration(s) if required.

The Standards Committee **Noted** that 6 Members had not completed a 'Notification by Member of a Local Authority of Financial and Other Interests' form, and that it was their responsibility to ensure that their respective Declarations were made and were kept up to date. Reference was made to paragraphs 13 and 14 of the New Code of Conduct. The Clerk and Monitoring Officer agreed to verify whether failure by Members to declare their Interests would affect their term of office as a Fire Authority Member.

CMO

c) Hospitality Register

The Standards Committee examined the Hospitality Register. The Clerk and Monitoring Officer confirmed that staff, through the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's website, were reminded of the need to declare any hospitality received.

The Standards Committee **Noted** that the Declaration of Acceptance of Office Book, Register of Interests and the Hospitality Register were available for public inspection, and that some Unitary Authorities published the Register of Interests on their respective websites.

The Standards Committee:

- **Recommended** that the Clerk and Monitoring Officer circulate timely reminders to Members to update their respective Declaration of Interests.

CMO



- **Agreed** that the Clerk and Monitoring Officer should invite the Fire Authority, at its annual meeting, to consider and comment upon whether the Members' Declarations of Interests should be published on the RBFRS's website.
- **Agreed**, at its next meeting, to:
 - Consider whether Members should declare the nature of any positions they held within any organisations.
 - Consider whether the Declarations made by Members contained sufficient detail of their respective declared Interest(s).
 - Scrutinise the newly completed Declarations of Interests made by the Members, including the newly appointed Members.
 - Consider the Fire Authority's guidance as to whether Members' Declarations of Interests should be published on the RBFRS's website.

CMO
Fire Authority
Agenda
27.06.07

Agenda
19.09.07

03.07.07 ATTENDANCE BY FIRE AUTHORITY MEMBERS AT FIRE AUTHORITY STANDING COMMITTEES

The Standards Committee was advised of the attendance of Fire Authority Members at Fire Authority Standing Committees for the period 28 June 2006 (Annual Fire Authority Meeting) - 30 April 2007.

This item was previously considered under item 03.05.07 (Annual Report to Fire Authority).

The Standards Committee:

- **Noted** the attendance of the Fire Authority Members at Standing Committees for the period 28 June 2006 (Annual Fire Authority Meeting) - 30 April 2007.

03.08.07 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Standards Committee agreed that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday 19 September 2007 at 5pm (Meeting Room 3, Headquarters, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service).

Minutes signed by Chairman as a correct record:

Signature 

Print Name A. GREGORY

Date signed: 19th Sept. 2007

