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## ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY'S STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING (PART I)



Held on Wednesday 19 September 2007

Meeting Room 3, Headquarters, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue  
Service, Dee Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 4FS

**Independent Members present:** Mr Albert Gregory  
Mr Peter McGuigan  
Mr John Quinton  
Mr Ronald Webb

**Elected Member present:** Councillor Peter Jones (Fire Authority Member)

**In attendance:** Lynda Kenyon (Committee Manager)  
Richard Taylor (Clerk and Monitoring Officer)

### Action

#### 04.01.07 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Andrew Bradley (Fire Authority Member) and Chris Harris (Fire Authority Member).

#### 04.02.07 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.

#### 04.03.07 ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

**The Standards Committee Noted** the Elected Members of the Standards Committee, as appointed by the Fire Authority at its annual meeting on 27 June 2007, as follows:

- Councillor Andrew Bradley
- Councillor Peter Jones
- Councillor Chris Harris

#### 04.04.07 PART I MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 MAY 2007

The Part I Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 15 May 2007 were **Agreed** as a correct record for signing by the Chairman.

#### 04.05.07 "THE CODE UNCOVERED" (STANDARDS BOARD TRAINING RESOURCE)

Due to a technical problem, the Standards Committee was not able to view the Standards Board Training Resource entitled "The Code Uncovered". The Clerk and Monitoring Officer (CMO) agreed to confirm if the entire training resource

CMO



could be viewed on the Standards Board's website. It was **Agreed** that Members of the Standards Committee could request to borrow a copy of the training resource from the Clerk and Monitoring Officer.

## 04.06.07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Standards Committee discussed each of the considerations presented, as detailed below:

### 1. **Whether Members should declare the nature of any positions they held within any organisations.**

Peter McGuigan felt that it was important for Members to declare their definitive positions within any bodies, and supported the Clerk and Monitoring Officer's recommendation that the amount of detail declared should be sufficient to enable a member of the public to understand the role that a Member has in an organisation. The **Standards Committee Supported** the Clerk and Monitoring Officer's recommendation, and **Agreed** that the Clerk and Monitoring Officer should include this recommendation within his 'Code of Conduct' presentation to the Fire Authority on 10 October 2007.

CMO

### 2. **Whether the Declarations made by Members contained sufficient detail of their respective declared Interest(s).**

The Clerk and Monitoring Officer felt that Members did provide adequate details of their Interests, but he noted that there could be improvement in some of the information provided, as alluded to in the considerations at the item above. The **Standards Committee Supported** the Clerk and Monitoring Officer's advice, and **Agreed** that the Clerk and Monitoring Officer should include this advice within his 'Code of Conduct' presentation to the Fire Authority on 10 October 2007.

CMO

### 3. **To scrutinise the newly completed Declarations of Interests made by the Members, including the newly appointed Members.**

The **Standards Committee Noted** that the Declaration of Interest Forms had been amended to take account of the new Code of Conduct.

The Standards Committee was invited to view the Declarations of Interests made by the Members, including the newly appointed Members. The Clerk and Monitoring Officer confirmed that 3 Members had yet to submit their respective Declaration, that he had reminded them on 2 occasions to date, and that he would continue to remind them as appropriate.

The Clerk and Monitoring Officer believed that Members appeared to have some misunderstanding of the declarations required in Section 2(a) of the 'Notification By Member of a Local Authority of Financial and Other Interests' form. He advised that he intended to change the word 'Authority' to 'Fire Authority' so that the section would now read "I am a member or hold a position of general control or management of the following body/ies to which I have been appointed or nominated by the Fire Authority".



The **Standards Committee Supported** the Clerk and Monitoring Officer's decision to include the additional word, "Fire", within Section 2(a), and **Agreed** that the Clerk and Monitoring Officer should advise the Members of this during his 'Code of Conduct' presentation to the Fire Authority on 10 October 2007.

CMO

**4. To consider the Fire Authority's guidance as to whether Members' Declarations of Interests should be published on the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's (RBFRS) website.**

The **Standards Committee Supported** the Fire Authority's decision taken at its meeting on 27 June 2007.

Councillor Peter Jones sought the Clerk and Monitoring Officer's advice regarding whether a Member was required to declare an Interest during discussions by, and decisions of, the Fire Authority or its Committees and Sub-Committees, which pertained to their respective Local Authority by whom they were appointed to the Fire Authority. The Clerk and Monitoring Officer advised that, within the recently adopted Code of Conduct, Members should declare a personal interest, however if the matter being considered also included any financial or regulatory implication for their Local Authority, they should also declare a prejudicial interest, and leave the meeting. He confirmed that such declarations might, for example, need to be made by Members of the Property and Resources Committee.

**04.07.07 CHAIRMAN'S ATTENDANCE AT THE STANDARDS BOARD ROAD SHOW 2007**

The Chairman informed the Standards Committee of the salient issues raised by the attendees at the Standards Board Road Show, as follows:

- In relation to the undertaking of investigations, what was the investigation criterion, what costs might be involved, and was there an identified budget?
- Availability of training material.

The Chairman made available the following:

- A copy of the Standards Board Code of Conduct Pocket Guide (May 2007). The Clerk and Monitoring Officer agreed to obtain further copies for the Members of the Standards Committee.
- A list of attendees at the Road Show should the Standards Committee wish to view it.
- Code of Conduct - Conduct for Members 2007 (copies also available on the Standards Board's website).

CMO

**04.08.07 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

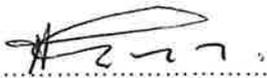
The Standards Committee **Agreed** that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday 23 January 2008 at 5pm (Strategic Command Centre, Headquarters, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service).



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Minutes signed by Chairman as a correct record:

Signature 

Print Name A. GREGORY

Date signed: 18 Oct 2008

