

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY'S STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING - PART I

Held on Tuesday 30 January 2007

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



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

Elected Members present: Councillor Andrew Bradley
Councillor Peter Jones

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

01.01.07 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr John Quinton (Independent Member).

01.02.07 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.

01.03.07 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 OCTOBER 2006

The Part I Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 10 October 2006 were **Agreed** as a correct record for signing by the Chairman.

01.04.07 MONITORING OF STANDARDS

The Standards Committee was invited to consider how best to monitor Standards of Conduct across the Fire Authority and to agree a methodology and time frame for undertaking such monitoring. The salient points of discussion were as follows:

- Mr Peter McGuigan suggested that the Fire Authority Members' Registers be examined. The Clerk and Monitoring Officer stated that the required Registers were kept by herself and were updated, and signed, as appropriate.
- Councillor Peter Jones felt it would be useful to issue some further guidance to Fire Authority Members as to what constitutes a conflict of interests, and Mr Peter McGuigan proposed that the Fire Authority Members should be written to.

Action

- The Clerk and Monitoring Officer suggested that the Independent Members might wish to attend a meeting of the Fire Authority, and recommended, in particular, the Fire Authority meeting being held on Wednesday 7 February 2007. She referred to an Agenda item, at this meeting, to establish a new Fire Authority Committee, where she felt some declarations of interest might be made by Fire Authority Members.
- The Standards Committee **Noted** that appropriate Declaration of Interests' guidance was included with the Agenda for each meeting of the Fire Authority and its Committees.
- Councillor Peter Jones suggested that, once the new Code of Conduct was adopted, it would be helpful to hold a training event for Fire Authority Members.
- Mr Peter McGuigan asked if the Clerk and Monitoring Officer had any links, both formally and informally, with other Authority Monitoring Officers. The Clerk and Monitoring Officer confirmed that she did, and that she was confident, that should any investigation, for example, be conducted by another Authority which also correlated to a fire matter, she would be notified accordingly.
- Councillor Andrew Bradley suggested that attendance records of Fire Authority Members at Authority meetings be examined.

Consideration was then given to how the Standards Committee would present and demonstrate its monitoring of standards to both the Audit Commission and to the Fire Authority.

Mr Peter McGuigan agreed to provide the Clerk and Monitoring Officer with a copy of the Wiltshire County Council Standards Committee's self-assessment checklist.

PM

The Standards Committee:

- **Agreed** that the Clerk and Monitoring Officer should write to Fire Authority Members regarding the new Code of Conduct, once adopted, provide further guidance as to what constitutes a conflict of interest, and incorporate an appropriate declaration form for completion and return.
- **Agreed** to view, at the next meeting, the Registers of Interest.
- **Agreed** to consider, at the next meeting, the Fire Authority's attendance at Authority meetings.
- **Agreed** to co-ordinate a training event for Members of the Fire Authority on the new Code of Conduct, once adopted.
- **Agreed** to submit an annual report to the Fire Authority's annual meeting, the draft 2006/07 report to be considered at the next meeting.

CMO

CMO

Agenda 15.05.07

LK

Agenda 15.05.07

**Chairman /
CMO**

Agenda 15.05.07

- **Agreed** that the Clerk and Monitoring Officer should e-mail the draft new Code of Conduct to the Standards Committee for their comments, and prepare a formal response to the new Code of Conduct consultation on behalf of the Standards Committee, to be agreed by the Committee in the absence of the Chairman
- **Agreed** that a further meeting, if required, be convened prior to the submission of the formal response to the new Code of Conduct consultation.
- **Agreed** that the Clerk and Monitoring Officer should consider an appropriate self-assessment monitoring reporting process in preparation of the annual Comprehensive Performance Assessment regime imposed by the Audit Commission.
- **Agreed** that a representative Independent Member attend at least 2 meetings per annum of the Fire Authority, to be co-ordinated by the Committee Manager.

CMO

CMO

Independent
Members /
LK**01.05.07 MEMBER ALLOWANCES**

The Standards Committee was updated on the payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance to Councillor Angus Ross who had been appointed to represent the Fire Authority on the Company Board for the new South East Regional Control Centre. The Clerk and Monitoring Officer confirmed that the payment was in line with other Fire Authorities.

The Standards Committee:

- **Noted** the report.

01.06.07 GUIDANCE FROM THE STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND RELATING TO THE IMPLICATIONS OF COLLINS J IN THE LIVINGSTONE CASE

The Standards Committee was informed that a more restrictive view needed to be taken when the Code of Conduct could apply to the actions of a Member, following the High Court decision in the Livingstone case.

The Standards Committee:

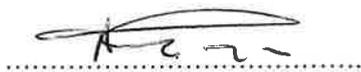
- **Noted** the report.

01.06.07 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- The next meeting of the Standards Committee will take place on Tuesday 15 May 2007 at 5pm in the Strategic Command Centre, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters.

Minutes signed by Chairman as a correct record:

Signature



Print Name

ALBERT GREGORY

Date signed:

4th April 2007

