



AGENDA ITEM: 14

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

21st March 2011

THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT TO THE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Report by Colin Everett, Clerk to the Authority

Purpose of Report

- 1 To consider the attached report from the Standards Committee.

Background

- 2 As a matter of good corporate governance the Standards Committee provides the Fire and Rescue Authority with an annual report on its activities during each financial year.
- 3 Consequently the Committee's seventh annual report, is attached for members' consideration.

Recommendation

- 4 The Standards Committee recommends that the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority notes the report.



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE OF NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Background

This is the Standards Committee's seventh annual report to the Fire and Rescue Authority and spans the period from April 2010 to March 2011. Legislation requires that Standards Committees meet at least annually.

The Terms of Reference of the Standards Committee provide a remit to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members of the Authority and to oversee the whistle-blowing policy for complaints against members of the Authority. Also, where statute permits, to receive reports and complaints about members and to conduct or oversee investigations and to make recommendations to the authority.

Membership

For personal reasons Samindre Soysa resigned from the Committee. Following a decision at the Authority annual meeting it was decided to advertise for a new member. On 1st September, interviews were held at Fire and Rescue Headquarters and David Morris was appointed.

Therefore, the new membership is as follows:

Independent members

Simon Fysh
Celia Blomeley
Jane A Eyton-Jones
David Morris

Fire and Rescue Authority members

Councillor Glyn Williams
Councillor Merfyn Thomas

Meetings held

The Standards Committee met on 4th May 2010 and 13th January 2011 and the following members attended:

4 th May 2010	13 th January 2011
Simon Fysh	Simon Fysh
Celia Blomeley	Celia Blomeley
Jane A Eyton-Jones	Jane A Eyton-Jones
	Cllr Glyn Williams
Apologies received from Cllr Merfyn Thomas and Cllr Glyn Williams	Apologies received from David Morris and Cllr Merfyn Thomas

Issues Discussed

At the meeting on **4th May 2010**, the following issues were discussed:

Following Samindre Soysa's resignation, Jane Eyton-Jones was voted vice-chair of the Committee.

The Committee discussed its forward work plan and decided to concentrate on the complaints and whistle-blowing policies as commissioned by the Authority.

At the meeting on **13th January 2011**, Members were informed that the Fire and Rescue Authority had reconsidered its decision not to pay an allowance to independent members. The Chair of the Standards Committee was now able to claim £362.50 per annum backdated to 1st April 2010 and other independent members were able to claim £190 per annum.

The Committee received an analysis of code of conduct training provided to Authority members by their constituent authorities to ensure everyone had received the necessary information.

The Ombudsman's Annual Report was circulated to members for information and review.

The Committee had previously discussed the stage 3 complaints procedure and it was agreed that it would be good practice to have an independent member from the Standards Committee to be a member of the panel for complaints that reached the stage 3 procedure. The independent member could be rotated in order to increase all independent members' knowledge and experience. However, it was acknowledged that only two complaints had ever reached stage 3 of the procedure. The Clerk would recommend a change to the constitution of the Complaints Panel. The Clerk further reported that the Panel, when it had met, was conducted well and that he had no concerns to report.

Complaints against members of the Fire and Rescue Authority

During the period of this report, no complaints have been made against councillors in roles as members of the Fire and Rescue Authority. Accordingly, no matters have been referred to the Committee for investigation or decision.

Financial Implications

The Standards Committee does not have a budget. The only additional costs incurred to be noted were the recruitment advertisement costs for a new member of £1,337. Routine costs incurred were travel costs to and from the meeting and the time spent at meeting by Members and Officers.

Conclusion

The Standards Committee recommends that the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority notes its report.