

**Minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 7 February 2019 at  
Fire and Rescue Headquarters, St Asaph Business Park**

**Present**

Antony P Young, Chair  
Sally Ellis  
Julia Hughes  
Cllr Dylan Rees, Anglesey County Council

Gareth Owens, Deputy Clerk  
Alwen Davies, Member Liaison Officer

**Apologies**

Cllr Owen Thomas, Flintshire County Council

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

1.1 None.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2018 were approved as a correct record.

3 MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Adjudication Panel for Wales (APW) - the Deputy Clerk confirmed that a letter had been sent to the WG about the lack of flexibility with the potential sanctions imposed by the APW; the WG had confirmed that it would not be changing the range of sanctions available to Standards Committees.

4 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

4.1 The Deputy Clerk presented the revised social media policy for Members to consider and recommend its approval to the Fire and Rescue Authority.

4.2 Members were informed that the Authority adopted a social media protocol in 2014. No significant changes have been made as the policy is still largely pertinent. However, the WLGA has since issued its own guidance for councillors.

4.3 Members discussed the Authority's revised policy and felt that it should be retained as it refers to usage of social media by members of the public and staff in addition to FRA members. However, Members also felt that the WLGA guidance should be adopted alongside the FRA's policy as it is very comprehensive in terms of Members' use of social media.

4.4 **RESOLVED to recommend to the Fire and Rescue Authority:**

**(i) approval of the revised social media policy;**

**(ii) adoption of the WLGA social media guidance for councillors.**

- 5 REVIEW OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE IN RESPECT OF MEMBERS
- 5.1 The Deputy Clerk presented the report which gave Members the opportunity to review the procedure for handling a complaint about a member of the Authority.
- 5.2 It was noted that the document had been significantly amended to reflect the adoption of the local resolution procedure which is a mediation process, therefore the Standards Committee will only be involved at the third and final stage of a complaint.
- 5.3 Members asked that a paragraph be included explaining the appeals process – that it will be referred to the APW. It was also agreed that paragraph 10.30 should cross reference and take into account the APW guidance about potential sanctions.
- 5.4 **RESOLVED to agree the proposed revisions to the complaints procedure and recommend its inclusion in the Authority's Constitution.**
- 6 THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE'S DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT TO THE FRA
- 6.1 The Deputy Clerk presented for approval a draft Standards Committee annual report to be submitted to the Fire and Rescue Authority.
- 6.2 A report is provided to the Authority on an annual basis as a matter of good corporate governance. Members discussed its content and noted that the independent member vacancy had not been filled. It was agreed that this would be re-advertised on the Authority's website, and that the Deputy Clerk would circulate it to monitoring officers across North Wales to promote it within their standards committee membership.
- 6.3 **RESOLVED to approve the Standards Committee's draft annual report 2018-19 for presentation to the Fire and Rescue Authority at its March 2019 meeting, subject to no further action being undertaken by the Standards Committee before the end of March 2019.**
- 7 ATTENDANCE OF COUNCILLORS AT FRA MEETINGS
- 7.1 The Deputy Clerk updated members about attendance of the FRA Members at meetings; he confirmed that attendance had improved by following the informal route of contacting chief executives of local authorities to discuss any attendance issues. Members therefore agreed to monitor this at future meetings and receive reports of trends of attendance.
- 7.2 **RESOLVED for the Committee to monitor FRA Members' attendance at meetings and to have regular reports on the trends of attendance.**
- 8 NEXT MEETING
- 8.1 The next meeting will be held on Thursday 21 November 2019 at 9.30am.