



AGENDA ITEM: 17

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

19th March 2012

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

Report by Colin Everett, Clerk to the Authority

Purpose of Report

- 1 Members are asked to:
 - (i) consider the attached report from the Standards Committee;
 - (ii) ratify the appointment of a new independent member onto 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 eighth annual report is attached for Members' consideration.
- 4 The report details membership issues including an update on the recent interviews to select a new independent member for the Standards Committee following the end of Simon Fysh's term of office. The Authority is requested to ratify the appointment of Tony Young, the successful candidate, as an Independent Member on the Standards Committee.

Recommendation

- 5 Members are asked to
 - (i) note the Standards Committee's Annual Report;
 - (ii) endorse the appointment of Tony Young as an independent member on the Standards Committee.



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

Background

This is the Standards Committee's eighth annual report to the Fire and Rescue Authority and spans the period from April 2011 to March 2012. 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

Mr Simon Fysh's term of office ended in September 2011, and as it was his second term he was ineligible to remain on the committee. Candidates of high calibre had been interviewed during the 2010 recruitment campaign and in order to save on recruitment advertising costs, it was decided to contact the candidates to see if they were interested in being re-interviewed for the post. The interview panel was reconvened and interviews were held on 1st March. The successful applicant was Tony Young.

Therefore, the new membership is as follows:

Independent members

Jane A Eyton-Jones (Vice-Chair)
Celia Blomeley
David Morris
Tony Young

Fire and Rescue Authority members

Councillor Glyn Williams
Councillor Merfyn Thomas

Attendance and Issues

The Standards Committee met on 8th June 2011 and the following members attended:

Simon Fysh
Celia Blomeley
David Morris

It was reported that the Authority had now approved a change to its stage 3 complaints policy to enable an independent member from the Standards Committee to sit on future stage 3 complaints panel.

Prior to his departure, Simon Fysh attended a North Wales Standards Forum meeting and in October 2011 Jane A Eyton-Jones attended the All-Wales Standards Conference.

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 budget for the Standards Committee is part of the committee services heading which covers all Authority costs. In 2011/12, independent members, for the first time, were entitled to claim remuneration for their role on the committee; the Chair's entitlement being £362.50 per annum and other members were able to claim £190 per annum. The Chair claimed his allowance but the other members declined. A total of £40 was claimed in travel expenses.

Conclusion

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