

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 3 OCTOBER 2022 AT SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS

115. PRESENT:

Mr S Barnes (Chair)	Independent Lay Member
Mr D Fussell (Left at 1800)	Independent Lay Member
Dr M Kerbey	Independent Lay Member
Ms K Thorogood	Independent Lay Member
Councillor G Holmes	SWF&R Authority
Councillor S Melbourne (Arrived 1650)	SWF&R Authority

APOLOGIES:

Mr R Alexander (Chair)	Independent Lay Member
Councillor A Roberts	SWF&R Authority

OFFICERS PRESENT: - Temp ACO G Thomas – Temp Monitoring Officer & Director of Corporate Services, Mrs S Watkins – Deputy Monitoring Officer & Head of Corporate Support, Mr D Daycock – Monitoring Officer, Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Authority (One item only)

WELCOME ADDRESS

Mr S Barnes advised Members of the Standards Committee that he would chair the meeting on behalf of Mr R Alexander and proceeded to extend a warm welcome to new Independent Member, Ms K Thorogood.

Members were also informed that there would be a slight change to the running order of the agenda, with Mr Dave Daycock's training presentation being brought forward to Agenda Item 4.

116. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

117. CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair had no announcements to report.

118. MEMBERS TRAINING DELIVERED BY DAVE DAYCOCK

Mr D Daycock, Mid & West Wales FRS Monitoring Officer, provided Members with an online verbal training session on the following key areas:-

- **Part 1 – Members Code of Conduct**
- **Part 2 – Work of the Standards Committee and Members of the Standards Committee**
- **Part 3 – The Ombudsman, The Adjudication Panel of Wales, and the Role of the Monitoring Officer**

Councillor Melbourne arrived at 1650 hrs.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the verbal training session, and thanked Mr Daycock for his informative and comprehensive electronic presentation.

Mr Daycock thanked the group for their kind words and withdrew from the meeting.

119. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 7 February 2022, were received and accepted as a true record of proceedings.

119.1 MATTERS ARISING WITHIN THE MINUTES

- **Item 108.2** - Relating to breaking down Key Performance Indicators into separate areas, the T/Monitoring Officer informed Members that he had met with the Ombudsman who had confirmed that individual complaints were not broken into separate areas. However, the Monitoring Officer was pleased to report that the Ombudsman had agreed to

attend the next Standards Committee meeting in January to address individual queries.

- **Item 112.2** - Relating to Members claiming for pre-meeting preparation time, the T/Monitoring Officer proposed that Members would be allowed to claim for 2 hours preparation time, but if some reports were deemed to be excessive reading then an extension would be considered at the time.

Following discussion, Members unanimously agreed to accept the proposal of claiming for 2 hours pre-meeting preparation time.

120. REPORTS FOR DECISION

120.1 REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The T/Monitoring Officer requested Members to consider and review the current Terms of Reference of the Standards Committee and to agree the Terms of Reference going forward.

Following debate on Item 8 set out in the proposed Terms of Reference relating to the Bribery Act, and whether there was training available to provide an overview of the complex piece of legislation, the T/Monitoring Officer agreed to consider this option for a future training session, as well as providing information on specific areas such as Anti-Fraud and Corruption, and Whistleblowing.

RESOLVED THAT

Following a review, Members unanimously agreed the Terms of Reference of the Standards Committee.

120.2 SCHEDULE OF OBSERVATION VISITS BY INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE TO SWFRA COMMITTEES

The T/Monitoring Officer presented Members with a schedule of Fire Authority Committee dates to enable observation visits to be scheduled by Independent Members of the Standards Committee.

Following discussion, the Chair agreed that whenever possible it would be good practice for Members to observe Fire & Rescue Authority meetings. He urged Members to refer to the timetable of meetings and to co-ordinate their availability with the Members Services officers.

RESOLVED THAT

Members unanimously agreed to accept and schedule the observation visits by Independent Members of the Standards Committee to South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority Committees.

Mr D Fussell withdrew from the meeting at 18:00 hrs.

121. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

121.1 PUBLIC SERVICE OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES – CODE OF CONDUCT CASEBOOK

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented a report to Members advising them of the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales Code of Conduct Casebook.

RESOLVED THAT

Following discussion on individual cases and the rise in social media cases, Members agreed to note the content extracted from the 'Our Findings Section' of the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales website, concerning complaints against the Code of Conduct for the period March 2021 to August 2022.

120.3 UPDATE REGARDING THE ALL WALES STANDARDS FORUM

The T/Monitoring Officer gave a verbal update on the proposed National Standards Forum. Via the All-Wales Monitoring Officers group, feedback had been received of the overwhelming support for the National Standards Forum to be established. The finer details of the inception have yet to be agreed, however it is expected that more detail will be available following the next Monitoring officers group meeting to be held on 7 October, 2022. The T/Monitoring Officer agreed to circulate any update following that meeting.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the verbal update on the All Wales Standards Forum.

120.4 OUTCOME REPORT FOLLOWING THE CONSULTATION ON WELSH GOVERNMENT'S STANDARDS OF CONDUCT STATUTORY GUIDANCE

The T/Monitoring Officer informed Members that Welsh Government consulted on the draft guidance relating to 'Standards of Conduct' under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, which included the following duties:-

- To promote and maintain high standards of conduct.
- To co-operate with the Council's Standards Committee
- To provide advice and training
- To write an Annual Report

RESOLVED THAT

Following discussion on a number of the key points and observations contained within the report, as well as the additional duties and responsibilities allocated to group leaders, Members agreed to note the content of the summary of responses to the consultation.

The Chair closed the meeting by thanking Members and Officers for their informative discussion and debate.