

Review of Role Descriptions and Skills and Competencies

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Paul Raymond, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260203 or Sharon Lloyd, Corporate Services Manager, on 01743 260210.

1 Purpose of Report

This report brings to the notice of the Committee the Role Descriptions for its Chair and Vice-Chair and the Role Description and Skills and Competencies for the Fire Authority's Independent Person in order for the Committee to make recommendations to the Fire Authority regarding any amendments required.

2 Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- a) Review and agree the Role Descriptions for the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Standards Committee (attached at Appendices A and B respectively);
- b) Agree to delete the Role Description and Person Specification for Independent, Non-Elected Member of the Standards Committee; and
- c) Consider and agree the Role Description and Skills and Competencies for the Fire Authority's Independent Person (attached at Appendices C1 and C2 respectively)

for recommendation to the Fire Authority.

3 Background

It is considered good practice for each of the Fire Authority's committees to review the Role Descriptions for their Chair and Vice-Chair and this action has been included in the Committee's Work Plan for 2013 (see item 9 on the agenda).

Accordingly, the Committee is asked to consider the amendments proposed to these Role Descriptions (attached at Appendices A and B) and make recommendations, as appropriate, to the Fire Authority.

In addition, the Committee is asked to consider and agree the Role Description and Skills and Competencies for the Fire Authority's Independent Person (attached at Appendices C1 and C2) and recommend their adoption. Although these documents were used during the recruitment process for the Fire Authority's two Independent Persons, they have never been formally adopted.

4 Amendments Proposed

Prior to introduction of the new standards regime it was a requirement that both the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee be an Independent, Non-Elected Member. As this is no longer the case, officers propose a number of amendments to the Role Descriptions to take this into account. The proposed amendments are set out at Appendices A and B (Role Descriptions for the Chair and Vice-Chair respectively). Additions are shown in bold italics and deletions struck through.

5 Deletion of Existing, and Adoption of New, Role Description

Previously, there was a Role Description and Person Specification for an Independent, Non-Elected Member of the Standards Committee. The new regime has abolished the requirement for such Members and it is, therefore, recommended that these documents be deleted.

As the Localism Act created the role of Independent Person, the Fire Authority appointed two Independent Persons in September 2012. For the recruitment process a Role Description and Skills and Competencies document were produced. It is recommended that these two documents, attached at Appendices C1 and C2 respectively, are now formally adopted. It should be noted that, as the Fire Authority and Telford & Wrekin Council share their Independent Persons, there is reference to both authorities in the Role Description.

6 Financial Implications

In addition to travel and subsistence allowances, Independent Members of the Standards Committee were paid a co-optee allowance of £263 per annum. Co-optee allowances are not paid to Independent Persons, which will result in a saving of £526 per annum to the Fire Authority.

7 Legal Comment

There is no statutory requirement for role descriptions to be set for the Independent Person or the Standards Committee Chair or Vice-Chair. It does, however, represent good practice for the role descriptions to be clearly set out and regularly reviewed. In particular, the Role Description for the Independent Person assists, when appointing to that role.

8 Risk Monitoring

When writing this report officers have reviewed Brigade Order 3 Part 2 Risk Management Protocol and have determined that there are no risk implications associated with it.

9 Equality Impact Assessment

Officers have considered the Service's Brigade Order on Equality Impact Assessments (Personnel 5 Part 2) and have decided that there are no discriminatory practices or differential impacts upon specific groups arising from this report. An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has not, therefore, been completed.

10 Appendices

Appendix A

Draft Role Description for the Chair of the Standards Committee

Appendix B

Draft Role Description for the Vice-Chair of the Standards Committee

Appendix C1

Draft Role Description for Independent Persons

Appendix C2

Draft Skills and Competencies for Independent Person

11 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority

Role Description Chair of Standards Committee

Office:	Chair of Standards Committee
Allowance:	None
Responsible to:	Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority

~~This Role Description should be read in conjunction with the Role Description and Person Specification for a Non-Elected, Independent Member of the Fire Authority's Standards Committee.~~

Officer Holder

~~The Chair of the Standards Committee must be a Non-Elected, independent Member of that Committee.~~

Purpose of Role

The overall purpose of the role of the office holder is:

- To chair the Standards Committee; and
- To provide leadership in matters concerning that Committee

Main Responsibilities

The main responsibilities of the office holder are:

- To work closely with the Chief Fire Officer and the Chair of the Fire Authority in order to promote and maintain a high standard of conduct by Members
- To maintain the integrity of the Fire Authority's Standards Committee
- To represent the Fire Authority and its policies in a positive and professional manner
- To chair meetings of the Standards Committee, including attendance at

pre-meeting briefings

- To contribute to, and present, an Annual Report on the work of the Committee to the Fire Authority
- To attend relevant conferences and meetings, as appropriate
- To participate in the recruitment process for Non-Elected, Independent Persons **or to nominate a member of the Standards Committee to participate in the recruitment process on his/her behalf** ~~Members of the Fire Authority's Standards Committee~~
- ~~To undertake, in addition, all of the duties specified in the Role Description of a Non-Elected, Independent Member of the Fire Authority's Standards Committee~~

Accountability

The tasks and duties outlined in this role description relate to the Member level activities of the Fire Authority.

The responsibilities outlined are without prejudice to the separate duties and responsibilities exercised by officers of the Fire Authority, for which they are accountable as employees of the Fire Authority as a whole.

When carrying out this role the Chair must have regard to the Fire Authority's Protocol on Member / Officer Relations, which can be found in Section ~~14~~ 15 of the Members' Handbook.

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority

Role Description Vice-Chair of Standards Committee

Office:	Vice-Chair of Standards Committee
Allowance:	None
Responsible to:	Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority

~~This Role Description should be read in conjunction with the Role Description and Person Specification for a Non-Elected, Independent Member of the Fire Authority's Standards Committee.~~

Officer Holder

~~The Vice-Chair of the Standards Committee must be a Non-Elected, independent Member of that Committee.~~

Purpose of Role

The overall purpose of the role of the office holder is:

- To deputise for the Chair of the Standards Committee, as required; and
- To support and assist the Chair of the Committee in providing leadership in matters concerning that Committee.

Main Responsibilities

The main responsibilities of the office holder are:

- To assist the Chair in working closely with the Chief Fire Officer and the Chair of the Fire Authority in order to promote and maintain a high standard of conduct by Members
- To assist and support the Chair in maintaining the integrity of the Fire Authority's Standards Committee

- To represent the Fire Authority and its policies to the media in a positive and professional manner
- To chair meetings of the Standards Committee, including attendance at pre-meeting briefings, as required in the absence, or inability to act, of the Chair
- ~~To undertake, in addition, all of the duties specified in the Role Description of a Non-Elected, Independent Member of the Fire Authority's Standards Committee~~

Accountability

The responsibilities outlined in this role description relate to the Member level activities of the Fire Authority.

The responsibilities outlined are without prejudice to the separate duties and responsibilities exercised by officers of the Fire Authority, for which they are accountable as employees of the Fire Authority as a whole.

When carrying out this role the Chair must have regard to the Fire Authority's Protocol on Member / Officer Relations, which can be found in Section ~~14~~ 15 of the Authority Handbook.

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority

Role Description Independent Person

Office:	Independent Person
Allowance:	None
Responsible to:	Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority and Telford & Wrekin Council

Purpose of Role

The overall purpose of the role of the office holder is to assist the Fire Authority and the Council in promoting high standards of conduct by elected and co-opted Members and, in particular, to uphold the Code of Conduct, adopted by the Fire Authority and the Council and the seven principles of public office, namely selflessness, honesty, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness and leadership.

Main Responsibilities

The main responsibilities of the office holder are:

- To be consulted by the Fire Authority and the Council through the Monitoring Officer and/or the Standards Committee before it makes a decision on an investigated allegation and to be available to attend hearing meetings of the Standards Committee for this purpose, if required
- To be available for consultation by the Monitoring Officer and/or the Standards Committee before a decision is taken as to whether to investigate a complaint or to seek local resolution of the same
- To be available for consultation by any elected Member, including a town or parish councillor, who is the subject of a standards complaint
- To develop a sound understanding of the ethical framework as it operates within the Fire Authority and the Council, its town and parish councils
- To participate in training events to develop skills, knowledge and experience and in networks developed for Independent Persons, operating outside the Fire Authority's and Council's area

- To attend training events organised and promoted by the Fire Authority's and/or Council's Standards Committee, ***if required***
- To act as advocate and ambassador for the Fire Authority and the Council in promoting ethical behaviour

Liaison with

- Monitoring Officer
- Members of the respective Standards Committees
- Officers and Members of the respective authorities and Town and Parish Councillors within the Borough of Telford & Wrekin
- Other key stakeholders within the community

Accountability

The Independent Person will be accountable to the Fire Authority and the Council.

The tasks and duties outlined in this role description relate to the Member level activities of the Fire Authority.

~~The responsibilities outlined are without prejudice to the separate duties and responsibilities exercised by officers of the Fire Authority, for which they are accountable as employees of the Fire Authority as a whole.~~

When carrying out this role the Independent Person must have regard to the Fire Authority's Protocol on Member / Officer Relations, which can be found in Section **14 15** of the Members' Handbook.

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority

Skills and Competencies Independent Person

Essential Criteria

The Independent Person will have:

- A keen interest in standards in public life
- A wish to serve the local community and uphold local democracy
- The ability to be objective, independent and impartial
- Sound decision-making skills
- Leadership qualities, particularly in respect of exercising sound judgement

The Independent Person will:

- Be a person, in whose impartiality and integrity the public can have confidence
- Understand and comply with confidentiality requirements
- Have a demonstrable interest in local issues
- Have an awareness of the importance of ethical behaviours
- Be a good communicator
- Be contactable at all times during normal working hours by telephone or email
- Be available to attend hearings, which may be held in the day time and at a relatively short notice

Desirable Criteria

- Working knowledge / experience of local government or other public service and / or of large complex organisations
- Awareness of, and sensitivity to, the political process
- Knowledge and understanding of judicial / quasi-judicial or complaints processes

Eligibility for Appointment

A person cannot be appointed as an Independent Person, if they are:

- Or were within a period of 5 years prior to appointment, a member, co-opted member or officer of any other relevant authority (this includes parish, district, county and unitary councils and Police and Fire Authorities); or
- A relative or close friend of the above; or
- Actively engaged in local party political activity.