

Committee Membership and Constitution

Report of the Clerk

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1 Purpose of Report

This report asks the Fire Authority to confirm appointments to committees and to the Local Government Association Fire Services Commission and to review the constitution of its committees.

2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Agree the appointment of Members to serve on committees, as set out in Appendix A;
- b) Appoint its representative on the Local Government Association Fire Services Commission; and
- c) Review and agree the proposed amendments to the constitution of its various committees, as set out in Appendix B.

3 Background

In accordance with the Fire Authority's Standing Order 7(2) for the Regulation of Proceedings and Business, the Fire Authority is required at least annually to review the constitution and composition of any committees or sub-committees, which it has appointed.

4 Membership of Committees

Members will have reviewed and decided upon the allocation of seats on committees to political groups at item 11a on the agenda for this meeting.

The Fire Authority is now asked to agree the appointment of Members to serve on its committees, as set out at Appendix A to this report.

5 Local Government Association Fire Services Commission

Each year the Fire Authority appoints its representative on the Local Government Association Fire Services Commission, which has historically been the Chair of the Authority. Members are asked to consider whether this arrangement should continue and appoint its representative accordingly.

6 Committee Terms of Reference

The current terms of reference for all committees and the Strategic Risk and Planning Working Group (StRaP) are set out at Appendix B to this report, with proposed additions shown in bold italics and proposed deletions struck through.

Each of the Authority's major committees, and the STRaP Working Group, has reviewed its terms of reference within the last three months and details of the more significant amendments proposed are given below.

Strategy and Resources Committee

Add

To review, agree and make recommendations to the Fire Authority on the Annual Statement of Assurance required by Government

In future fire and rescue authorities will be required to provide such a statement to the Government and to make it available to the public.

Audit and Performance Management Committee

At its meeting in April 2012, the Fire Authority agreed the reinstatement of delegation to the Audit and Performance Management Committee for approval the Statement of Accounts for 2011/12 and subsequent years. Changes are, therefore, proposed to the bullet points relating to the Statement of Accounts and to the annual report 'International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 260' (see page 5 of the appendix). The latter bullet point has also been moved so that it now follows the former, as they are directly linked.

It is proposed that all references to the 'Audit Commission' and 'District Auditor' are amended to 'external audit' or 'the External Auditor' in preparation for the changes, which will take place as a result of the new local public audit framework introduced by the Government.

Human Resources Committee

To move

To consider and determine appeals against dispute in accordance with the Collective Disputes Procedure

so that it appears under the jurisdiction of Appeals Hearings. As this is an appeal function it would seem more logical to include it here.

To replace (at bullet points six and seven under Appeals Hearings) *'Firemen's Pension Scheme and the New Firefighters Pension Scheme'* and *'Firemen's Pension Scheme, the New Firefighters Pension Scheme, National Firefighters' Pension Scheme'*

with:

firemen's and firefighter pension scheme legislation

to avoid having to make changes whenever a new scheme is introduced.

Strategic Risk and Planning Working Group

Minor amendments are proposed to take account of the 2020 Strategic Planning process.

In addition to the reviews conducted by committees, officers have carried out a review for the remaining committees and propose the following amendments.

Standards Committee

Following enactment of the Localism Act 2011 there is now no requirement for the Fire Authority to have in place a series of sub-committees to deal with the local investigation and determination of complaints relating to breach of the Code of Conduct by Members.

At its meeting in February 2012 the Fire Authority agreed that the terms of reference of the Standards Committee should include the oversight of the duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members of the Fire Authority; the consideration of Investigation Reports, arising from complaints that a Member of the Fire Authority has breached the Code of Conduct; and the granting of dispensations. It also established a new, less bureaucratic procedure for dealing with complaints and making decisions about complaints, which have been investigated. Accordingly, a number of significant changes are proposed to the terms of reference of the Standards Committee, including the abolition of its various Sub-Committees.

Pensions Panel

At its meeting in April the Human Resources Committee agreed to recommend to the Fire Authority that the Vice-Chair of the Committee be able to deputise for the Chair on the Pensions Panel. Members are asked to consider this proposal, which, if agreed, will in turn require an amendment to the Role Description of the Vice-Chair of the Committee (see report 11d). Apart from this no changes are proposed to the terms of reference of this Panel.

Brigade Managers' Employment Panel

No changes are proposed to the terms of reference of this Panel.

7 Financial Implications

There are no material direct costs arising out of the recommendations of this report, although many decisions of committees will impact on budgets and need financial approval.

8 Legal Comment

Under its Standing Orders for the Regulation of Proceedings and Business the Fire Authority is required at least annually:

- To consider the constitution of its committees and sub-committees and their membership (Standing Order 6.3); and
- To review the constitution and composition of any committees or sub-committees which have been appointed (Standing Order 7.2)

9 Equality Impact Assessment

An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

10 Appendices

Appendix A

Appointment of Members to Serve on Committees

Appendix B

Constitution of Committees

11 Background Papers

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority

Standing Orders for the Regulation of Proceedings and Business