

Update on Ethical Framework Issues

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact John Redmond, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260203 or Sharon Lloyd, Corporate Support Manager, on 01743 260210.

1 Purpose of Report

This report updates the Committee on issues relating to the ethical framework and brings the following procedures and documents to the notice of its Members:

- Members' Code of Conduct;
- Code of Conduct complaints procedure;
- Complaints form;
- Disclosable pecuniary interest form; and
- Dispensations Procedure.

2 Recommendations

Members are asked to note:

- a) The update on matters relating to the ethical framework; and
- b) The procedures and documents listed in section 1.

3 Background

This Committee is now an amalgamation of the Fire Authority's former Standards and Human Resources Committees. As this is the first meeting of the new Committee and not all of its membership has been involved in ethical framework issues, it is appropriate to provide an update on these issues and to bring certain procedures and documents to the notice of Members.

4 Update on Ethical Framework Issues

Complaints

There have been no complaints in 2013/14 relating to breaches of the Fire Authority's Code of Conduct.

Independent Person

The Fire Authority's Independent Person is Chris Humphries, who acts also as Independent Person for Telford & Wrekin Council. He has access to training, guidance and support from Hoey Ainscough, a company established by former employees of Standards for England. There is no cost to the Fire Authority, as this is met by Telford & Wrekin Council. Such support is particularly important, given that Members, who are subject to a complaint, have the option of contacting the Independent Person directly during the complaints process.

5 Procedures and Documents

Members' notice is drawn to the following procedures and documents, which form the basis of the standards element of the Committee's work. All were reviewed by the Standards Committee in September 2013 and any amendments recommended were approved, where necessary, by the Fire Authority later that month. The next review of these documents is scheduled in the Committee's Work Plan for October 2014.

Links to these documents have been provided, rather than appending them to this report, in order to save on paper and postage.

Members' Code of Conduct

The Fire Authority's Code of Conduct complies with the provisions of section 28 of the Localism Act 2011, namely it enshrines the following principles:

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

The Code of Conduct can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/sites/alpha.shropshirefire.gov.uk/files/fra/membershandbook/section-12-v1.0-august-2013.pdf>

Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure

The Code of Conduct complaints procedure can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/managing-the-service/fra/complaints/guidance>

The complaints form, adapted from that used by Telford & Wrekin Council, can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/managing-the-service/fra/complaints/complaint-form>

Disclosable Pecuniary Interest Form

The disclosable pecuniary interest form can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/sites/alpha.shropshirefire.gov.uk/files/fra/membershandbook/section-12-v1.0-august-2013.pdf>

Members were reminded of the need to keep their forms up to date in January of this year. With the exception of one Member, all have either amended their forms or confirmed that they are up to date.

Dispensations Procedure

Specific reference to dispensation rules and procedure are contained both in the Code of Conduct and the Dispensations Procedure. The latter can be found at the following link:

<https://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/sites/alpha.shropshirefire.gov.uk/files/fra/membershandbook/section-4-v1.1-march-2014.pdf>

6 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7 Legal Comment

The statutory requirements for the Code of Conduct and ethical framework for Members is set out at part 1, chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011. The Fire Authority's Code of Conduct does comply with this requirement.

8 Initial Impact Assessment

This report contains merely statements of fact. An Initial Impact Assessment is not, therefore, required.

9 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

10 Background Papers

The Localism Act 2011