

Role Descriptions for Committee Chair, Vice-Chair and Non-Elected, Independent Member

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Purpose of Report

This report seeks to establish Role Descriptions for the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Standards Committee and to review the Role Description and Person Specification for a Non-Elected, Independent Member of the Committee.

2 Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- a) Consider and agree Role Descriptions for the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Standards Committee (attached at Appendix A and Appendix B respectively); and
- b) Review, and agree the current Role Description and Person Specification for a Non-Elected, Independent Member of the Committee (attached at Appendix C1 and Appendix C2 respectively)

for recommendation to the Fire Authority.

3 Background

The Fire Authority currently has Role Descriptions for the Chair and Vice-Chair of the majority of its Committees. There are, however, no Role Descriptions in place for the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Standards Committee.

In order to provide clarity about what each role entails it is proposed that the attached, draft Role Descriptions are adopted for the Committee. Furthermore, this is an action included on the Committee's Work Plan for March 2010.

The Role Description and Person Specification for an Independent, Non-Elected Member of the Standards Committee has previously been agreed by the Fire Authority and is now due for review (as per the Committee's Work Plan).

4 Role Descriptions

The proposed Role Description for the Chair of the Committee is attached at Appendix A and for the Vice-Chair at Appendix B. Members are asked to comment upon, and agree, the Role Descriptions for recommendation to the Fire Authority.

Attached at Appendix C1 and C2 are the Role Description and Person Specification for an Independent, Non-Elected Member of the Standards Committee. Some minor amendments to the Role Description are suggested (shown in bold italic or struck through) in order to provide greater clarity for the role. The Committee is asked to consider the proposed amendments and also whether any further changes are required and make recommendations to the Fire Authority accordingly.

5 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from the adoption of the proposed, or amendment of the current, Role Descriptions and Person Specification.

6 Legal Comment

The Role Descriptions for Chair and Vice-Chair and any changes to the Role Description and Person Specification for an Independent, Non-Elected Member of the Standards Committee must be agreed by the Fire Authority.

7 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.

8 Appendices

Appendix A

Proposed Role Description for the Chair of the Standards Committee

Appendix B

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

Appendix C1

Proposed Role Description for a Non-Elected, Independent Member of the Standards Committee

Appendix C2

Person Specification for a Non-Elected, Independent Member of the Standards Committee

9 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk), the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Balanced Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	*
Capacity		Member Involvement	*
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	
Comprehensive Performance Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Efficiency Savings		Retained	
Environmental		Risk and Insurance	
Financial	*	Staff	
Fire Control/Fire Link		Strategic Planning	
Information Communications and Technology		West Midlands Regional Management Board	
Freedom of Information / Data Protection / Environmental Information		Equality Impact Assessment	*

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 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 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 15 of the Authority Handbook.

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority

Proposed Role Description Independent, Non-Elected Member of Standards Committee

Office:	Independent, Non-Elected Member of Standards Committee
Allowance:	Co-optee's allowance of £273 per annum plus £53 for up to 4 hours and £106 for over 4 hours spent considering locally allegations of breaches of the Code of Conduct
Responsible To:	Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority

This Role Description should be read in conjunction with the Person Specification for Independent Members of the Fire Authority's Standards Committee.

Purpose of Role

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

- To promote and maintain a high standard of conduct by Members
- To oversee the Register of Members' Interests; and
- To oversee the effectiveness of the Fire Authority's procedures for investigating and responding to complaints about Members

Main Responsibilities

The main responsibilities of the office holder are:

- To advise the Authority on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct
- To assist Members to observe the Members' Code of Conduct
- To advise, train, or arrange to train, Members on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct

- To develop, maintain and monitor the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct
- To issue advice to Members on the treatment of personal interests and on conduct matters generally
- To consider and grant, or otherwise, dispensations in respect of Members' interests*
- To consider and act on any report from the Monitoring Officer on any matter, which is referred to the Monitoring Officer
- To exercise such functions as are required under the Fire Authority's procedures for local **assessment**, investigation of referred complaints and for the local determination of allegations of misconduct*
- To exercise such other functions as the Fire Authority considers appropriate

Maintenance of Independence

The role of Independent Members will influence the public's perception of the integrity of the Standards Committee. It is, therefore, essential that Independent Members are seen to be genuinely independent of the Fire Authority. Consequently, an Independent Member cannot be someone, who

- Is a relative or close friend of a Member or officer of the Fire Authority, which may reasonably be seen to prejudice their independence;
- Has been a Member or officer of the Fire Authority in the previous five years;
- Is a current, elected Member of another authority, such as a Parish, Town, Borough, District, Unitary or County Council; or
- Is an undischarged bankrupt.

Guidance from Standards for England states that it is preferable that an Independent Member is not a member of any political party (although there is nothing in law which prevents it). It is, therefore, a condition of appointment that a successful candidate is not, or will not, during their term of office, become, a member of any political party.

* The various procedures relating to dispensations and local Investigations and determinations are set out in Section 4 of the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority Members' Handbook.

Accountability

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

An Independent, Non-elected Member is accountable for his/her performance to the full Fire Authority, which is responsible for his/her appointment.

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

Whilst performing their role Independent, Non-elected Members must have regard to the Fire Authority's Protocol on Member / Officer Relations, which can be found in Section 14 of the Authority Handbook.

Term of Office

Appointments are for a term of three years and persons appointed will be eligible for re-appointment for subsequent terms.

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority Standards Committee

Non-Elected, Independent Member Person Specification

	Essential	Desirable	Method of Assessment
Personal Qualities	<p>Good character</p> <p>Common sense approach to problems</p>	<p>Assertiveness</p>	<p>Interview</p>
Experience	<p>Evidence of taking an active role in initiating action and making decisions on ethical and moral issues</p>	<p>Committee experience</p>	<p>Application Form</p>
Skills, Knowledge and Abilities	<p>Good communication skills</p> <p>Ability to interact positively with other Members of the Fire Authority and the public</p> <p>Ability to understand and interpret complex issues and make informed decisions</p> <p>Knowledge of, and commitment to, equal opportunities</p>	<p>Experience of public sector organisations and awareness of the political environment</p>	<p>Application Form and Interview</p>
Special Factors	<p>Independent of any political party and Local Government</p> <p>Willing and able to attend meetings at least three times a year, any hearings and appropriate training sessions (daytime and / or evening)</p>	<p>Live within or on the borders of the county of Shropshire</p>	<p>Application form</p>